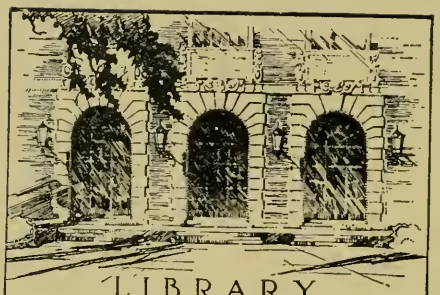

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THE

# MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

## A Romance.

BY

GEORGE STEPHENS.

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"A scholar's fancy,
A quab, 'tis nothing else — a very quab."

FORD.

---

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., CORNHILL.
BOOKSELLERS TO THEIR MAJESTIES.

1835.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY STEWART AND CO.,
OLD BAILEY.

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# THE

# MANUSCRIPTS OF ERDÉLY.

## MANUSCRIPT XXV.

" Anne ego terrigenas potius mirabor in ipsis
Procubuisse satis, vitæ quibus attulit idem
Principium finemque dies, quam cæsa Getarum
Agmina, quos tantis aluit Bellona tropœis,
Totaque sub galeis Mavortia canuit ætas?"
De Bello Getico.

" It is the duty of him that holds the standard to die upon the place."—South.

" They linger yet
Avengers of their native land."
Gray.

The object of the regent of Hungary in professing to accept the crown, tendered to him by the envoy of King Ferdinand, even at the time, he meditated inflicting a most signal chastisement on the imperial force, under the Marquis Piadena, will be explained in the sequel. It may suffice in this place to observe, that Martinuzzi was not of a disposition patiently to endure dictation, because the conduct prescribed, happened to concur with his own views. He foresaw, clearly, that in the event of the city of Coloswar falling, and Ferdinand's obtaining forcible possession of the regalia, but one of two alternatives would be left open to him. He would either be

driven to accept the crown, as the fief of Austria, according to the proposition of Antoine Ferraro, or he must submit to the sacred treasure being transmitted to Vienna, as a legitimate spoil of war. To raise the siege of this important fortress, therefore, and at the same time to strike a blow, which should make Austria rue her insolent aggression, were motives, which determined the regent to take the field.

For weeks before the insidious proffer of the Austrian envoy, Martinuzzi's attention had been drawn to the forced marches of Castaldo, and the visit of Sultan Solyman to Hermanstadt, under the pseudonyme of Abu Obeida, had partly related to the same matter. Secretly, Martinuzzi concentrated his forces in the vicinage of the capital, and concerted his measures with the august Turk, for the relief of Coloswar. It was determined, that the Turkish Basha Achamates should conduct his army from Belgrade, by a circuitous route towards the point of attack most to be guarded against, but since the surprise which was contemplated, required to be executed, not only with celerity, but with secrecy and caution, it was not till the eve of his own departure from Hermanstadt, that Martinuzzi despatched the bloody glaive through the province, to summon all, who held their possessions by military tenure, to meet him, and join the standard of their respective chiefs, as they marched towards Coloswar.* He preferred commencing operations with a force numerically inferior to what he might have collected, by transmitting his sanguinary summons a few days sooner, to risking the betrayal of the mine he was about to spring, ere the enemy learnt its existence in the instant of explosion. "Nuntiosque periculi victoria præcederet."† Owing to this cause, many of the more devoted of the regent's partizans whose feudal estates, lay remote from the scene of action, had not rendezvoused near the Samos by the time, that the Hungarian army

* M. Bechet, auctor est.

† Velleius Paterculus, lib, i. c. 29.

reached its banks. Martinuzzi had previously detached ten thousand of his choicest horsemen, under command of Quendi Ferens, in whose zeal and ability he confided, with orders to cross some leagues below Coloswar, and then, by means of a slight detour, to make a demonstration on the left wing of the imperial army. He expected so to time his own passage, as to be in a position to engage the Austrians in front, just as the hostile lines of Quendi Ferens and Castaldo, came into conflict. If Castaldo should be forced to retire from the field—by that most dispiriting of all movements, a running fight with a superior enemy, he would be precipitated upon the lines of Achamates, (to whose army the inequalities of the ground, and the vast tracks of forest afforded a present cover,) and thus placed between three fires, his utter destruction would appear to be inevitable. This scheme, however felicitously conceived, was impeded in the working by an accident, that it was impossible Martinuzzi should forecast. We allude to the sudden coldness, which sprung up during the past night between the regent and his sublime guest, consequent on the latter's assassination of the Count Balassi. Though no word passed on either side, pointing to that intent, Martinuzzi suspected, that he would do wrong to rely on any co-operation of the Turk, in the engagement which impended. The hope and confidence, with which he had taken the field, were thus to a certain degree abated; and to add to his state of dubiety in respect to the issue, his principal officers had discovered a much greater lukewarmness, and disinclination to his cause, than he could have apprehended, though he still had reason to fear, he was not cognizant of the disaffection to its whole extent. Now, however, such considerations presented themselves too late. A portion of his best troops had already pushed forward beyond recall, and, if he would not leave his finest *corps d'armèe* to be cut off by the army of Castaldo, it became unavoidable to make the passage he originally

proposed, and, at all hazards, to operate a diversion in Quendi Ferens' favour.

Long before the grey light of the earliest dawn was mellowed by the sun's rays, the Hungarians were gradually formed in array of battle. As fast, as each feudal captain successively gained the opposite banks of the river, he marshalled his respective followers. They got into position on an irregular chain of hillocks, which extended from within a quarter of a mile of the Abbey of Coloswar,—where their right wing rested part against the river, part in air,—to a deep wood, which protected the extremity of their left flank. In front, the ground fell away rather precipitately, and at their rear flowed the river Samos, which also formed an angle with their extreme right. The abbey, peninsula'd, and connected by an isthmus of eminences with the imperial position, was distant about half a mile from Coloswar; and held as an advanced post of the beleaguering force. The space betwixt the city walls and the sacred edifice was of a broken, marshy, and impracticable character, traversed in those days by a narrow branch of the Samos, that occupying in its course a deep ravine, was still left feathered by a few larch and other pine trees. This brook covered the advanced lines of the Austrians, and extended by a semi-circular sweep, as far as the extremity of their left wing,—its two wooden bridges had been broken down, at the commencement of the siege, by order of Count Raoul, one of the Castellans of the fortress. On an opposite chain of heights, running off in an oblique direction from the Abbey of Coloswar, was posted the greater half of the imperial army, which presented the appearance of several detached segments of a convex circle. The easy slopes declining into the vale, that winded between the opposing armies, rapidly diverged from their nearest proximity, not far from the abbey, till at, what may be called their base, namely, the distance between the extreme right of Castaldo, and the extreme

left of the Hungarian army; the marshy level intervened for an interval of more than three miles. So that this almost continuous sweep of men-at-arms, suggested rather the idea of the battle array of a single army, than of its being the hostile order of two distinct and adverse forces. In the rear of the imperialists extended a slight range of undulating ground, richly, though irregularly wooded. Their advanced position, as we have said, curved forward, so far as the venerable abbey, which it occupied. Their one flank inclined towards the rising wood; their left had been thrown to some distance from their centre, and was in a great measure hidden from the view of the Hungarians, by the interposing buttresses of Coloswar. It was at this point, that Quendi Ferens first came in contact with the enemy. There was little disparity, in respect to numerical force between the two armies. Each might consist of about fifty thousand men,—in addition to which, Martinuzzi reckoned on the diversion of some five thousand troops engarrisoned in Coloswar; and on such co-operation, as might be expected from the fierce and undisciplined bands of peasantry, which in great numbers had flocked to his assistance, from all parts of the country. He, moreover, had originally relied, in case of need, on being supported by the army of Massanates, which, to the amount of near a hundred thousand men, lay encamped at about five or six leagues distance, on the actual base of the beleaguering force. The clock of the abbey knelled three hours after midnight, as the regent touched land. He instantly mounted on his Anatolian charger, and rode to a gentle eminence, which commanded a view of the battle field, now veiled in the dim indistinct twilight of the waning stars. He had no difficulty, however, in tracing the enemy's position on the opposite bank, by the pale glimmer of their watch light.

"My lords and copatriots," said the regent, addressing himself to his chiefs and principal officers, who

now congregated round him, to learn the order of battle, and receive his last commands; "this day the insulting spoiler must either bite the dust, or Hungary bid adieu henceforth for ever to that independence of a foreign yoke, which, for centuries, it has been the glory of her sons to preserve inviolate. For such as outlive this day, there is no middle condition between slavery and triumph. Is there a man of ye, but who would call upon his native soil to cover him, rather than be daily and hourly held in subjection, by German laws and German lawgivers? Is there one who would not prefer, that the source of life failed, as beseems a hero and a patriot, in the field of carnage, than, for the sake of a wretched remnant of existence, to have the tide at one eternal ebb, indignant at the heart, and feel, ay, witheringly feel, the honest crimson mantling his manly brow in humble shame, before whom? — his God? — no, his fellow creature! but not his fellow countryman; before the *Nemet** viceroy and the *Nemet* waivode, to know, like the despoiled and enslaved Bohemian, that his country's vars and cities have Austrian governors; to see his own allodial estates, the castles and manors of his fathers, possessed by Austrians of the meanest birth, and lowest station, and to be loaded, like the citizens of Prague, so late his fellow-subjects, with new and exorbitant imposts, to defray the expense of his coercion. To know, — ay, mark this, my friends! and let it nerve your arms, and make steady your hearts, in the hour of battle, — to know, I say, that that crown, which he, who annexed Erdély to the territory of the Magyars, and who now, a blessed saint in heaven, looks down on this day's great question, received, as a symbol at once, and an evidence of Hungaria's sovereignty, — that this crown, fabricated by angels, that erst circled the head of Constantine himself, — this crown, the gift of Rome, is worn by a petty prince

* Nemet, i.e. German.

of Germany,..by one, to whom our laws are unknown, and our customs contemned, and who, without scruple, will abrogate the one, and abolish the other; to whom our beautiful tongue is a dead letter, and the classic language of our constitution, that which Cicero spake, and which hath clothed our coronation oath, with I know not what of sanctity, for many a century of freedom, — that language, ay, by Heavens! the very words, by virtue of which Ferdinand will wear your crown, are a blank to the barbarian! — WILL *wear your crown, did I say?* — indeed, you need not hope for such an honour; no, by one act, your conqueror means to deprive you of the favour of Heaven, which the possession of St. Stephen's diadem typifies, and assures to Transylvania, and to despoil you of all honour among the nations, by bearing away the ornament of your kings, — *whither?* — to Vienna. Infamous plunder! eternal ignominy! Shall we suffer the *Fóltos Német** to rob our dear country of Heaven's countenance and earth's respect? — never be it said! There, fellow-countrymen, bivouac the ravishers, who, with professions of amity, and in the time of peace, have marched into the heart of the land. *There!* and *there* the crown of your ancestors, that they have come to purloin you of, and *here* is my good sword, which now I draw, not to be again laid in rest, while one of yonder host remains unslain or unfettered. Oh, my countrymen! every victorious inspiration is on our side.† God and man alike bear witness to the justice of our cause. But, be the event what it may, my part is taken; — if I must not live to serve the land I love, I can, at least, die for her. Yonder turrets, that contain the holy relic, we all venerate, look down on the result. I stand to my charge. Behold! if the oriflamb of Hungary, that I now

* Foltos Nemet, spotted German, is, in Hungary, a common opprobrious appellation.

† "Omnia victoriæ incitamenta pro nobis sunt." — Tacitus. Agric. cap. 32.

unfurl, be not destined to wave over us, in triumph, it must be wrenched from your regent's gripe in death. The means of retreat," he added (unbuckling his golden spurs, and throwing them aside), "not less in obedience to the laws, than in accordance with my stern resolve, I thus, in the sight of all, cast from me. Hungarians! your standard-bearer only quits the field as a corpse, or as a conqueror!"*

The loudest acclamations followed this harangue, mingled with the clangour of bucklers and the clashing of swords on "sounding shields," while ten thousand lances were flourished in the air. At a little space apart, some dozen chiefs and magnats might be observed, consulting together with impassioned gestures, but in under tones, while a greater number thronged round the regent, with expressions, indicative of their determination to conquer or die.

"A word respecting the order of battle," resumed Martinuzzi, after a minute's pause. "My Lord Zrinii, here are your orders: you will find I commit the left wing to your command. Your gallant son Balthazar, I shall retain, by your leave, along with my nephew Pereny, near my person. Your post, noble Horwith, is to head the right wing; George, Count Tury, and Stephanus, Count Dobus, are appointed to the reserve. And for the vanguard, my lords—"

"Ay, the vanguard!" interpealed several voices, "who leads the vanguard?"

"Think not," cried Count Nadastis, in an insolent tone, "that warriors like us, some with blood-royal in their veins, and many of whom can trace their descent, beyond that epoch, you just reminded us of, will submit to be led by a gownsman! Nobles are in the field, whose

* "Hanc ego vel victor cedam, vel morte tenebo
Victus humum."
Speech of the King of the Geta in Claudian.

line of ancestry enrols a hundred sires,—let one of such be appointed to the vanguard."

He stopped, and another voice broke in:—"The crown of St. Stephen, if not on Ferdinand's, on whose brow do you mean it to descend? Peers of Hungary, we have a greater enemy to bustle with than Ferdinand, if we durst but front him.—Speak out, lord cardinal, and tell us for whom we are to spill our blood, or we stir not from this spot."

"He intends to make himself king, and we are to perish, to pave the way for his ambitious projects," cried another.

"He conspires to dethrone the Lady Czerina," exclaimed a former voice.

"To dethrone her," repeated Count Nadastis; "say, to murder her! Soldiers! the life of your sovereign is not safe. All join to rescue the Lady Czerina—the Rex Hungariæ*,—and let this ambitious churchman learn to tremble at our union."

Immediately, a cry of "Czerina!" was raised by some score of voices. The insurgent chiefs who were near, took up the word; it was caught by those further removed, and then reverberated along the ranks. The origin of the interpellation not being understood some paces off, many probably supposed, it had been given forth by the commander, for a war-cry. Like a *feu-de-joie*, from voice to voice, the name of Czerina was wafted up to the heavens, in one long peal, by the whole army.

Some very painful thoughts, mingled, not unlikely, with feelings not altogether so, struggled in the breast of the cardinal; he averted his head, as if desirous of hiding his emotion, and for a minute there was silence upon the ground—deep, and difficult—the silence of suspense. It was broken by Martinuzzi.

* For the origin of the Hungarians styling their female sovereigns Rex, see Pet. de Rewa, cent. iii.

"Is this just? Is this honourable? Is this your patriotism, valiant capitanies?" he demanded, in a voice, that rang from the embattled plain up to the clear and placid sky. "I show you," he proceeded, pointing at the same time with his hand, in the direction of the adverse armament — "I show you the road to renown, or, I should say, the only road to safety, and you turn on your deliverer — on the very man, who (pardon me, Heaven! the boast wrung from me by ingratitude,) who, again and again, in the field, and at the council-board, has proved your salvation. I bring you in front of the invader, and at the point of battle, ay, at that very time, when I am about to cast my life in a common stake with your own, you take the advantage of my defencelessness, to put this outrage on me — ME! to whom one and all owe their properties, their lives, their liberties, and their having a country to fight for. For shame, lords! no more of this! rather let our deeds, on this day, evince who best loves Hungaria. You, my brave capitanies, who purpose to adhere to her cause, put yourselves at the head of your several commands; let all others withdraw from the field. My part, gentlemen, is taken; stand by me who list. Here am I rooted, and not the assault of yon host, nor the unjust clamour of men, false to themselves and duty, shall shake me; if I am forced, single and unaided, to do battle, so be it. Let Castaldo, with Tarquin strides, come on, and conspiracy do its worst, by this ensign, the regent of Hungary is pledged to stand or fall."

This brief address, which probably owed, at least as much to the earnestness of the regent's manner, and the warm tone, in which it was delivered, as to the words themselves, imparted to most of the hearers a portion of the fire, which glowed in the bosom of the speaker. The majority of those present, hasted at once to their allotted posts, and even such magnats as were most disinclined to the regent's government, were impressed by the honest

fervor of his speech. They came to reflect, that the present was not the hour or the arena for settling their differences. However, some few loitered, "frustrate of their will," and still seeking a cause of quarrel.

"You have not yet told us, who is to lead the vanguard," cried Count Nadastis. "If we must have a gownsman for our king, we at least need not submit to his rule in battle."

"Ay, surely 'tis contrary to law," exclaimed another.

In the midst of these treasonable cries, repeated from mouth to mouth, another chieftain, with flushed cheek and impassioned gesture, appeared on the scene; he was on foot, and walked up to the regent: it was Count Maylat.—"I demand to know," he said, "who leads the vanguard?"

Martinuzzi looked at him, sternly, and was about to reply, when a firing beyond the city walls, passed off in thundering echoes along the distant woods. Loud shouts, the din of drums, and the reports of arquebuses, gave note that the battle had begun. Then it was known that Quendi Ferens, in spite of the state of the roads, and other impediments, had, at length, moved round, and commenced the work of destruction.

"Balthazar," said the regent, "speed to your father, and bid him push forward with all his force.—Where," he murmured to himself, "where, in the name of God! loiters Turascus? Trumpeter, sound a charge! — to arms! to arms!" rang along the lines, like the shrill summons of fate, and the long roll of the drums, and the flourishing accompaniment of the trumpets, shook the air with their martial music.

As that wild point of war sunk upon the wind, Maylat broke in upon the pause,—"Who leads the vanguard?" he persisted, keeping close beside the regent.

The charger of Martinuzzi reared and plunged violently; but the attention of the horseman was appa-

rently directed to the city walls. Presently, the gates were thrown open, and line after line of men-at-arms began to deploy through the portcullis.

"Lord cardinal, who leads the vanguard, I again demand of you?" cried Maylat, in a menacing voice, rashly impaling the ensign's staff, in his eagerness to enforce the prelate's attention.

Martinuzzi turned on his saddle, and, like lightning was the glance, he shot down upon the daring magnat. "Treason!" he shouted forth, in a voice, that sounded through the host, like a war-trumpet, and at the word, his falchion claved the air, and instantaneously the graf released his hold, as the severed tendons of his wrist reeked round with blood. "Lord Maylat, I lay you under arrest. Nephew! look to it;" and, almost immediately, the maimed and bleeding graf was borne away, by a few men-at-arms, commanded by Maximilian Pereny.

The decision of the regent was productive of present good, though it proved only to be temporary. The incendiary nobles drew back, almost to a man. It was at this moment, that Count Turascus arrived upon the field.

"My lord," said Martinuzzi, "we have waited for you, — your tardiness hath caused some hot question here, ill-timed, to say the least of it: you are aware, that by customary right, the distinction of generalissimo belongs to the palatine, and, since you, my dear lord, at present perform the duties of that office, I herewith deliver you your truncheon. Gentlemen, noble knights, chieftains, of Hungary! Valentinian Count Turascus, the son of a line of a hundred sires, leads the vanguard in this day's battle."

Turascus bowed, and then, in an under tone, addressed a few words to the regent.

A shade of something like anxiety passed across the countenance of Martinuzzi, like a darkening cloud,— "I trust the day will not go so hard with us," he said; "but now to the van!—and, perhaps, it were better you

detached some of yon mal-contents with their clans, to reconnoiter. We must avoid, if possible, their being left unemployed, — inaction, at such a time, were the father of conspiracy. See, if Count Zrinii have not half-traversed the morass, and already threatens the right flank of the enemy! Go, and prepare to support him, — nay, courage, Turascus, *we must conquer or perish!*"

The discharge of musketry from the opposite heights bore a tremendous burthen to his words, and, in truth, the position of both armies, at that moment, was not a little critical. It seemed impossible, but that defeat must prove destruction to the party, which should sustain it. Martinuzzi, if routed, was precluded, by the river in his rear, from accomplishing his retreat; besides that, in a moral and political point of view, the consequences of his failure, in this bold enterprise, were incalculable. Thus much seemed certain, the independent existence of Transylvania, and all chance of the resuscitation of Hungary were alike at stake. On the other hand, if Castaldo were worsted, he would have to encounter the army of Massanates in his line of retreat.

Meantime, the garrison of Coloswar, commanded by Raoul, had sallied from the fortress in strength, and proceeding across the impracticable ground and morass before-mentioned, commenced a series of attacks, on the advanced post of the abbey. The assailants were received with "the iron sleet of arrowy shower," mingled with musketry. Three times did Raoul advance to dislodge the enemy from this formidable position, and, as often was his sortie unsuccessful, and he driven back across the swamp, under cover of the city defences.

Martinuzzi saw, that the gaining this point would be attended with considerable results, since, from its being on a level with the table-land of the Austrian lines, he could make it the basis of his operations, instead of having to ascend to the range of acclivity, along which they were drawn up. Therefore, seizing the occasion of

the Austrian officer having too incautiously followed up his success, Martinuzzi detached two thousand of his guard to carry the abbey. The diminished garrison left to defend that post of vantage, was wholly inadequate to withstand this fresh attack,—the place was forced, and occupied, while the victorious detachment pushed on to the attack of the imperialists, now in the act of refording the intersecting morass. Thus, taken in front and in the rear, the Austrians were broken with great slaughter; the divided Samos ran red with blood, and was encumbered with dead bodies. An ensign, and more than five hundred men, were made prisoners, and instantly sent off to Coloswar. But now the regent began to be anxious, respecting his communication with Quendi Ferens, which, as matters stood, was effectually cut off. He feared, lest Castaldo might overpower his Lieutenant-General, before he were able to form a junction with him. Raoul, therefore, received orders to push forwards, at the head of ten thousand men, to make a grand attack on the left of the Austrian centre. The troops defiled, under the eye of Martinuzzi, along the ridge of the embankment or causeway, commanded by the abbey. The foremost ranks, amounting to one-fourth, consisted chiefly of archers and slingers; behind these was a large mass of cavalry, partly to protect either flank, and partly with the object of debouching through the intervals, and harassing the enemy. At this moment, the sun burst through his dense pavilion with extreme brilliancy. The mists drew aside like a curtain, and discovered this glittering cloud of gallant soldiers, with floating plumes and pennons, sweeping forwards in compact order to the onset,—their glancing casques, and twinkling spears, flashing forth like vivid lightning from its deep bosom,—

> "Their gilt coats showed like dragon's scales,
> Their march like a rough tumbling storm."

"Your eminence," said Pereny, riding up to his

uncle; "will not refuse my accompanying Lord Raoul on the charge."

"Be advised, Maximilian," said Martinuzzi; "and remain by my side."

"Nay," replied Maximilian; "my hereditary claims are, to say the least, as weighty as those of Turascus. I looked for the vanguard,—however, if I may not bear a command in this battle, the flag of Pereny waves not in the wind. I shall withdraw with my handful of cavalry, into Coloswar."

"Well, have thy will, my son; and pray Heaven, my forebodings prove ill-founded," said Martinuzzi.

Maximilian, with an affected smile, and an internal contempt for the regent's admonitory expression of countenance, dashed his steed after the column of Count Raoul, and thus parted the uncle and nephew, *never to meet again in this world.* The Marquis of Piadena's disposition on that memorable day was as follows:—

His army, like that of Hungary, was divided into three bodies. The centre was commanded by himself, in person. The right column was entrusted to Baron Roecan, and the left, which had been so inauspiciously elongated from the main body, and which was the first division, opposed to the assault of Quendi Ferens, had been placed under the valiant leading of Count Salm. In a great measure taken by surprise, the Austrian general, after three hours hard fighting, gave way to the repeated onsets of Hungarian cavalry. By the rout of the left wing, the centre was left uncovered; and just as the Counts Raoul and Pereny, poured down in front, with the whole momentum of their powerful detachment, the squadrons of Quendi Ferens rolled on, like the ocean at full flood, upon the flank. But the pupil of Pescara proved himself, on this occasion, as well as on many others, profoundly skilled in the tactics of his school. Placing his men in more compact order, he caused a heavy body of horse to wheel round, and outflank the

cavalry of Quendi Ferens, in their turn. The manœuvre, by compelling the Hungarian general to face about, enabled Castaldo to anticipate the impetuous assault of Raoul. Trampling down, or disregarding the feeble resistance of the slingers and archers, in advance, the Austrian invincibles did not wait to have their battle broken, by the furious onset of the advancing enemy. Castaldo pushed forward a body of horse, which darting through the intervals of the ranks, showed like the eruption of a flash of lightning, from an overcharged cloud,—and now the battle joined on all sides. Lance involved with lance,—spear clashed against spear,—sword and mace on helm and buckler rang,—shields locked in close and mortal grapple,—fire-arms flashed,—arrows hissed, and javelins hurtled by. St. Stephen for Hungary! shouted forth Count Raoul, flourishing his sword aloft; but as the sound rang on his lip, *a quarrel* from a cross-bow, aimed from behind, struck and unhorsed him; the dying general lay stretched on the earth, whilst the bodies of trampling steeds instantly closed over him, like the tempestuous billows above the drowning mariner.

"You have hit the mark by G—d!" observed Count Nadastis, in a subdued but exulting tone, to a man habited as an archer, who stood near him. The two were half hidden by the broken ground, a short space apart from the fray. "Her highness will thank you for this,—you could hardly have bettered your aim, unless, indeed, you had struck *him*."

"Raoul fallen!" cried the other; "and I for a time, am the first man in Coloswar. Hurrah! hurrah!—"

"True Mircè; but restrain your exultation, and speed to the city, to report the death of Raoul. Give out that he fell by no foreign hand, but was falsely done to death; of course *the kiral*. *The kiral*, you understand, caused the assassination."

"But Nadastis," objected Mircè; "Alaric Polgar,

and his band, are not in the field. What can that mean?"

"They will make their presence manifest shortly, I make no doubt," replied Nadastis. "Remember, however, in any event, whether he thunder at your gates in triumph, or fly to them for refuge, Coloswar must be closed to Martinuzzi."

"I have Queen Isabella's instructions for that," replied Mircè, as he turned away; "trust me, I know my cue."

The tide of battle was, by this time, on the turn. Castaldo's design, of driving back his assailants, had failed, and, like a spent wave, the baffled imperialists recoiled upon the surging armament, whence they issued.

Meanwhile, Maximilian Pereny, having taken the command, led forward his troops, against the serried lines of the enemy, with irresistible effect; and the violence of the shock, might be compared to the irruption of some rapid and swollen stream, that, suddenly finding a vent, carries away, in its rushing course, the very mounds, and sluices, that were intended to contain and imprison its volume. Castaldo, despite his utmost efforts, saw himself obliged to give ground, and, before Count Nadastis, who, early in the action, had had his horse shot under him, could be remounted, and come up to remorate the progress of Pereny, the impetuosity of the Hungarian charge, had fairly broken through the imperial files. It was at this juncture, that Quendi Ferens bore down the Spanish horse, which had been opposed to him, and thundering forward, effected a union with the main body. Castaldo sent orders to Count Salm, to bring up his remaining force; while he, by a gradual change of position, difficult to accomplish in the heat of a conflict, that every moment told more and more against him, did his utmost, to insure this last reserve coming into the battle, with due effect.

It was at this interesting crisis, just as the imperial

*corps-de-reserve* had arrived on the scene of action, that a Transylvanian warrior, having forced his horse within lance's length, of the object of his animosity, confronted the elated Pereny. This was Count Nadastis, who, dark and terrible in aspect, and followed by a band of his retainers, rushed forward to take the lead.

"One effort more, soldiers! and the victory is achieved!" cried Maximilian.

"*Assassin of Count Raoul!* yield the command to your senior, and superior in the art of war," broke in Nadastis, in a loud voice.

Even amid the din of that bloody strife, many a startled ear caught the sense of those fatal words, and many an eye was directed to the speaker. Maximilian surveyed the graf, in haughty and indignant surprise. Taken at unawares, his very astonishment, for a moment, struck dumb his powers of speech; and Nadastis seized the opportunity of his silence, to follow up his fatal accusation, by urging upon the victorious Hungarians, the necessity of their instantly substituting him (Nadastis) to the command.

"Liar and traitor!" exclaimed Maximilian, when, at length, his voice served him; "depart, ere I hurl thee headlong to the earth."

"And add another slaughter, to that of the good castellan," retorted Nadastis. "Soldiers, clansmen, and lovers of Count Raoul! will you follow a man, whose soul is embrued in the blood of our lord and leader? Not by an open enemy, not by an Austrian hand, was he done to death; but by the stroke of the hired assassin of this Pereny, *and his uncle.*"

"Lord Nadastis speaks truth," joined in a man-at-arms. "I saw where the castellan fell, and noted that the square-headed instrument of his death, came from behind. Comrades, he has been foully murdered!"

It unfortunately happened, that at this imminent moment of peril, Quendi Ferens was far away, following

up his pursuit of the imperialists. Castaldo, who occupied the superior ground, marked the sudden halt and disarray, of the Hungarians, at the moment that victory so unequivocally inclined to their standard, but could not divine the cause. At this crisis, Count Salm chanced to be near his commander.

"One desperate experiment, my gallant friend," said the latter; "and yet the day may be retrieved: ride down, like a storm, upon yon staggering mass, who seem disordered by their very success, and sweep them before you into the valley."

In obedience to this order, Count Salm, rallying the light cavalry, and Spanish auxiliaries, whom Quendi Ferens had put to flight, rushed forward, and charged the Hungarians, with the violence, at once, and the celerity, of a whirlwind. The moment, in which he timed his assault, was so critically favourable, that ere he came within lance's length of the enemy's line of battle, it presented one inextricable scene of terror and confusion.

To explain this state of things, we should premise, that from the circumstance of the men-at-arms, who had sallied from Coloswar, having been either Count Raoul's own immediate serf-men, or having long served under him, they experienced in his favour, that personal attachment, incident to the feudal relation of lords and clansmen. Never pausing to consider the improbability of Count Nadastis' imputation, with electric facility, as is the use of persons in that class of life, more especially when influenced by that strong corporate spirit, which is commonly so adverse to truth and justice, they credited the fatal averment. To a man, they laid their lances in rest, or otherwise ordered their arms; while voices on voices, vociferated, "We'll shed our blood no more, to please the regent, who has caused Count Raoul to be basely slain."

Maximilian, whose mortification at the imposition of

so shallow, but infernal a figment, may be much better imagined, than described, turning to his troop, conjured and obtested them, not to desert him, their general, in the moment of victory. His expostulations and commands, were urged in vain.

"Murderer!" or "assassin!" was the only replication he could elicit, accented by many thousand voices; and what was more exasperating, the word was taken up, with insulting triumph, by the hostile ranks, and prolonged in a shout, that widely rung through the welkin.

It was then, that, excited nearly to madness, and fatally oblivious of consequences, he unslung his carabine, and, with shaking hand, presented it at the head of Nadastis.

"False rebel!" cried Maximilian, "I warn you, unless you recant your base calumny, your slanderous tongue shall this day feed the ravens!"

"And what art thou, that darest threaten me?" retorted Nadastis, "whose uncle is an usurper, whose father was a triple-dyed deserter of his country,—what art thou thyself, but——"

Here Maximilian drew the trigger of his piece, but every limb trembled so violently, in his irritation, that the ball whizzed past Nadastis' ear, innocuous.

"What art thou?" repeated that chieftain, in the same contemptuous tone as before, "but a vain, yet scarcely stingless, excrement of earth, whom I therefore, although it irks my manhood, will now put out of its pain."

With these words, Nadastis spurred his steed, and, with his sword drawn, was about to make a thrust at Maximilian, when he found the weapon struck upward, and sent whirling fifty feet in the air.

"Leave *me* to deal with him," exclaimed a deep voice, that, like that of the last trumpet, abruptly bore down the din of arms and argument; and a strange gigantic form, sprung through the warrior throng, like a panther towards its prey.

Every eye turned to this new ostent, and every eye recoiled. The apparition was, indeed, one, which might, for a moment, well appal the stoutest heart. What seemed its shape, presented the grim and loathly likeness of the king of terrors. The armed image looked less like a living warrior, than some sculptured type or personification of battle. His panoply, from helm to heel, had been wrought to represent the osseous characteristics, and the gaping interstices of the gaunt skeleton: three sable ostrich plumes hung over from the glittering casque, like funeral pennons.

"Leave *me* to deal with him," thundered the dreadful voice of the intruder, as he sprang beside the fiery barb of Maximilan. Seizing, with a giant's grasp, the bridle-rein, and raising his iron hand aloft, he reared and backed the snorting animal. Startled by the abrupt and spectral appearance, dismayed, probably, by its violent gesture and the threatening intonation of its voice, and thrown back on his haunches, by an arm of resistless power, the mettled steed plunged desperately, while his rider, taken by surprise, lost his usual arrogant self-possession, as an unwonted tremor made itself felt, through every nerve and fibre, and obtained the mastery over his spirit. Be the cause what it may, fear, rage, amazement, or the mingled influence of all, Maximilian, in his nervous helplessness, let slip the moment of safety, and was violently precipitated upon the plain.

"To thy dunghill earth, whelp of a wolf-dog!" cried the invincible destroyer.

A shout of acclamation, that rent the vault of Heaven, resounded from the ranks, while thrice over the prostrate body the trampling hoofs were made to pass, with murderous aim and effect.

"Holy Mary!" gasped forth the expiring graf. "In these discomplexioned garments, disfigured too with wide unfashionable slashes,—with this gory aspect, and no little curious device to propitiate thine eyes, no choice

touch of fancy to allure thee to forgiveness; what wilt thou think of me? Oh, for one drop of that waste *rose-nohl*,* which I ——— Rascals! slaves! only wash away these ugly stains from my cheek, for the love of our Lady and the credit of chivalry. Oh, Mary! thou art gentle to solicit — pah! what filthy ground for a prince to die on — thou canst make allowances,—and, —" he appeared to struggle for further utterance; but, in his effort to say more, the spirit of the erring Maximilian went on its trackless pilgrimage. Meantime, the gigantic knight had vaulted into the empty seat, and brandishing his battle-axe aloft, harangued the disordered host. Insisting mainly upon the manner of the death of Count Raoul, he called on all who loved their lord, to turn about, and avenge his murder.

While thousands were expressing their readiness to follow him, in acclamations, that outrang the clashing of their lances against their shields,—the Hungarian lines were driven in, and Count Salm, charging at the head of the cavalry of reserve, with shouts of assured victory, swept every thing before him, in the general rout. The Hungarian horse, who had so nearly carried the day, were in turn borne back; the field was strewed with the wounded and the dead, and the remnants of the lately victorious array were seen flying, in every direction.

At this crisis, Count Nadastis drew off from the combat, and some thousands of the Hungarians followed so fatal an example. With their swords sheathed, flags of truce displayed, and loud cries of "Hungary and Austria for ever!" these deluded men threw themselves, *en masse*, into the enemy's ranks.

The Austrian general inwardly exulted, as he saw them approaching from some distance. "So," he thought, "Polgar is in the field, but without his band; this is no time to question him, or, ——, would that he had en-

* Ottar of roses.

countered the father instead of the son; but Peter Pereny's honors are dated." Nadastis rode up to Castaldo, at a gallop, "My lord," he said, with a smile, "thus do we, the confederated barons, keep our promise—the Lady Czerina ——"

"I am now too busy, sir, to hear what you would say," broke in Castaldo, haughtily, and turning away, to order the prisoners to the rear of his position. "Does the dolt think," he muttered to himself, as he rode forward, to rid himself of the presence of the horrified Hungarian, "that Austria has nothing else to do, than to conquer kingdoms, for the sake of giving them back again?"

It was now, that Quendi Ferens re-entered on the scene of action. He saw, at a glance, that the waves of victory were spent, and, like some powerful spring-tide, were receding from the side of Hungary. The troops of the murdered Raoul were dispersed, governed by various fortunes, all equally ruinous. A part were defiling into the valley, under the auspices of the spectral cavalier; the remainder were either being cut to pieces, or hurried away prisoners, by Count Salm's division. Still the Hungarian general hesitated not an instant, in ordering a charge — but the spirit of desertion was electric — the greater number stood undecided, and such as obeyed, wavered, before they advanced a hundred yards. Count Salm, having wheeled about and attacked them in flank, this gallant body of horse were broken with great slaughter. It was in vain that Quendi Ferens called upon them to stand to the combat, he had the inexpressible grief of beholding his *victorious* cavalry sink under the shock, as if touched by a spell.

Meantime, the battle was fiercely contested, on Castaldo's right. Baron Roccan found the utmost difficulty in keeping his ground, since, besides having to hold Count Zrinii's force at bay, his flank was exposed to the hostile operations of some thousands of the peasantry, who, armed with clubs, hatchets, scythes, and other rus-

tic implements, were, ever and anon, debouching through the broken glades of woodland. The post, occupied by these undisciplined forces, enabled them to maintain and renew their efforts at pleasure, and, on each repulse, they would escape within the wooded recesses, where the Austrian horse could not act against them, to reform for a fresh sally.

At length, Count Turascus, who commanded, in person, the central column of the Hungarians, struggled up the steep ascent, on another point, and, uniting himself, in great force, to the troops of Zrinii, poured, like a torrent, upon the already staggering imperialists. Line after line was broken, and, shortly, the whole battalion fell into inextricable disorder.

"Now!" cried Zrinii, as he deployed, even in the very face of the dispirited Austrians; "now level your lances, gentlemen, for another charge, and the day is our own! *Talpra vitez!** St. Stephen for Hungary!" But the enemy, apparently panic-struck, did not stand to encounter that fierce shock; they gave way at all points, and what remained of the right-wing, fairly fled the field.

The pursuit of the discomfited division was hotly followed up by Zrinii, at the head of his own troop, and that of Turascus, which pushed on without orders, and the united force was swelled, by the accession of armed peasantry, who now issued in great numbers from the woods. It was in vain, that the general-in-chief, called on Zrinii not to pursue his success too far, or too incautiously. Hill, and hollow, vanished from under the hoofs of his cavalry, and, heedless of the admonition, he was out of hearing, slaughtering and dispersing all, who would not accept of quarter. Five minutes might have passed, and the sounds of battle were already receding in the distance. Turascus drew in rein. Directing his attention towards Coloswar; he glanced over the various bodies of men-at-arms, that, scattered in every direction,

* On warriors.

surged to and fro, like the waves of ocean — as well as the wreaths of eddying smoke permitted him to distinguish, he thought, he discovered an inexplicable confusion in Castaldo's battle. Where, at that time, waved the banner of Count Raoul? He looked intently, but, as Turascus supposed, owing to the sulphureous screen that curtained the combatants, he could not descry its broad pennon; and yet it was evident to his practised eye, that the centre of the imperialists had been forced. Presently, as the flashes of fire gradually became less frequent, the vaporous cloud, that previously enveloped the scene of combat in its folds, rolled lazily upward, before the light breeze, and the Hungarian general could discern the vast mass, waving like a troubled sea. Shortly, Hungarians and Austrians confounded, either poured down into the valley, or defiled along the chain of eminences, that conducted towards the abbey of Coloswar.

"What, in the name of God!" thought Turascus, "can that movement, made in apparent concert, mean?"

While he yet marvelled, and his heart began to feel troubled within him, he suddenly remarked a horseman galloping, at full speed, up the declivity. Turascus perceiving him to be some aide-de-camp, and eager to hear his communication, spurred his steed forwards to diminish the distance between them. They met,—the officer was Balthazar Zrinii, who, breathless and panting, for a moment could not speak—his horse was covered with foam and gore, and staggering with fatigue, and gashed with wounds. In his hand, he held a sword, reeking with blood — it was a Spanish weapon, and had belonged to a foeman. Turascus looked all he would ask; his heart was filled with fearful forebodings, and his tongue refused its office.

"Where, my lord, are your troops, and those of my father?" demanded Balthazar; "I am sent to reclaim them."

"To reclaim them!"

"Ay, where is my father?"

"In the full heat of pursuit," replied Turascus; "far ere this, from the annoyance of the enemy, or the support of Martinuzzi."

"Then," said Balthazar, "the game is up."

"Heavens!" returned Turascus, "what am I to augur from your words? How goes the field?"

"Irretrievably lost."

"Ha! and counts Raoul and Pereny, where are they?"

"The one in Heaven — the other — but that matters not: such of their followers as are not left lifeless on a field of victory, or prisoners to a *vanquished* enemy,— are forcing the battle of the regent."

"Balthazar, I implore you to speak intelligibly and in few words."

"In one word, my Lord Turascus, TREASON. By treason have the Counts Raoul and Pereny been done to death. Not a man of the squadron is left to rally,—the stay of our army, the cavalry of Quendi Ferens is cut to pieces."

"And yonder column of Hungarians?" said Turascus.

"Are under the orders of that fiend incarnate, who killed Pereny," answered Balthazar.

"Fatal hearing!" cried Turascus; "but hasten, Balthazar, to recall your father — the body-guard of Martinuzzi, must yet be whole, and it is not impossible the day may be redeemed."

The young Zrinii sped on his mission.

"Oh, Hungaria! Hungaria!" said Turascus, internally, as he directed his way (necessarily circuitous) towards the ground that Martinuzzi occupied. "Ever a prey to the cankerworm of thine own dissensions, ruined by thy very triumphs!— at once thine enemies' terror, and their victim!"

Return we to another part of the field, where the regent, pale, but calm and composed, awaited the event.

Breathless aides-de-camp came galloping fast with their disastrous tidings. The discomfiture and utter rout of the left wing,—Count Raoul down,—the disorder of Castaldo's centre,—the murder of his nephew,—the slander,—the treason,—all these pieces of intelligence successively pierced the attentive ear of Martinuzzi. He saw that success was wrested out of his hands, by the treachery of some few lords, and the easy credulity of his troops; still he relied on what Quendi Ferens would accomplish, whose cavalry was flushed with victory. The total disappointment of his hopes, in that regard, caused him a most painful emotion at the heart. He cast his far-seeing eye towards the scene of smoke and slaughter. "They come on apace," he said, internally, "carrying dismay and death in their train; and I make small doubt that Zrinii and Turascus, by this time, are far on their way to the borders." At this thought, an expression of impatience escaped him.

"Did your eminence speak?" said Balthazar. Zrinii, who, just returned from the thickest of the fray, now stood by the regent's side.

"Balthazar, prithee speed to my lord, your father, and Count Turascus; tell them, as they love the cause of Hungary, to hie hither with the utmost despatch."

"Be assured," replied the gallant youth, "if I live, my father's troops shall be brought into action within two hours." He kept his word at the cost of his life.

Tury and Dobus were then ordered to bring up their reserves, and occupy the fortified position of the abbey. These troops, together with his own body-guard (the élite of the army), and a portion of the wing of Count Horwith, that had not hitherto been engaged, might amount to, perhaps, ten thousand men, and made the entierty of the force left to Martinuzzi, wherewith to oppose the fierce onset of the imperialists, who, now, in their turn, were assuming the offensive. They came on, indeed, in dreadful array, and terrible was the shock. Fifty falconets

and other pieces of ordnance, which Castaldo, owing to the sudden and unexpected attack of the Hungarians, had been unable, before, to bring into the field, were now turned upon Martinuzzi's position, with tremendous effect. Count Salm poured onwards, with his thousands upon thousands, along the higher chain of ground, that Raoul had before traversed, so fatally for himself and followers. The fortifications of the abbey were assaulted, by horse and foot, in the same instant. The slaughter was dreadful, and extended far and wide. The ground abutting on the banks of the divided Samos, deep dinted with the tramp of man and steed, became plashed and slippery with gore; while the lazy tide, ensanguined from the oozing wounds of drowning warriors, washed the walls of the beleaguered city, with its blood-stained waves. The Counts Dobus, Tury, and Horwith, fought with desperate, but unavailing heroism; holding out the consecrated building, as if in very despite of fate. They had planted a body of archers, on the abbey roof, who poured a continual shower of missiles, on the heads of the assailants. But the irresistible strength of Count Salm, could not be longer withstood. The Hungarians were driven in, the portals forced, and then, under his very roof, the Deity might behold men, madly violating his ordinance, and defacing his image.

And now, the spectral knight, raging like a whirlwind, in the van of the insurgents, and supported by a body of Spanish horse, having scaled, and carried the whole length of heights, that fronted the Hungarian position, hurled himself, with an impetuous impulse, and loud shouts of anticipated triumph, on the firm and compact battalion of Martinuzzi. The rebel ranks rolled on, with the roar and violence of ocean, dashing its thousand waves on the invulnerable rock. Fellow-subjects shed each other's blood, in the name of their sovereign; and the nature of the adverse weapons, and the skill and courage of those who wielded them, was equal on both

sides. The phantom warrior, at their head, wrought prodigies of valour, mowing a path with his battle-axe, which, on the Spanish horse endeavouring to follow up, they would find the gap reclose, when the assailing force, like a spent wave, would recoil upon the plain. And now the archers, and slingers, who occupied the roof of that sacred post, so often referred to, were cut to pieces, and their places filled, by an Austrian force of like description.

Count Horwith was left for dead, and of the gallant defenders, only two hundred survived, who endeavoured to force their way, with Counts Dobus and Tury, towards the impregnable plateau, where Martinuzzi had established his phalanx. But every effort of the conquerors was exerted to force that last and formidable post. Fire-balls were discharged into the midst, and volley after volley of musketry poured on the thick mass; while missiles of every description, showered down from the abbey battlements, like aerial monsters, unintermittedly stooped upon their prey.

The repeated onsets of the volunteer knight caused terrible havoc, and in addition to this calamitous state of things, Castaldo and Count Salm had formed their battle anew, and now defiled, in terrific force, under cover of the hillocks, and broken ground, which skirted the Samos, to take the regent in the rear. The spirits of the imperialists had been raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by their commander, who told them, that the enemy no longer fought for honour or victory, but for the forlorn chance of retreat and safety. But not in that hour, when, returning from his series of victorious fields, he was met by the suppliant ambassadors of Ferdinand and of Solyman, who, acknowledging his authority with flattering professions, courted his alliance and solicited his friendship, did Martinuzzi appear more calm, decided, and collected than now, in this apparent extremity of his fortunes. Amid this earthquake scene of confusion and

uproar, encompassed by slaughter and dismay, he preserved his entire composure. His courage was as keen, and presence of mind as undisturbed, as when he first showed the Hungarians the glorious path of victory, and himself led the way. Conspicuous by his superb Anatolian charger, and the national standard that he upheld, he was seen towering onwards into the thickest of the fight, and where he dwelt his blows, right and left, inevitable fate edged his trenchant blade. He had now considerably contracted his circuit of defence, and rank after rank of his unbroken battalion were levelled before the untiring assaults of that unknown knight, the sweep of whose flashing battle-axe seemed to emulate the scythe of the fell destroyer, he personated. The fiery torrent from afar, meanwhile, fell amongst the impenetrable, but rapidly diminishing phalanx, like the gigantic hail that came in aid of Joshua ; and with more than the valour of that sword of Israel, but, it is to be feared, with none other of his attributes, the spectral cavalier charged, and charged again, slaying, and trampling down, and whereever he turned, scattering and defacing, with his irresistible strokes, "the pomp of battle." Twice did Count Dobus, who had literally cut his way to the regent's assistance, over the dying and the dead, essay to oppose himself to the progress of this prototype of death, and as often, the tide of battle bore him past his mark. But when the steel of their weapons next emitted sparks of fire, the unknown knight turned upon him, with the apparent resolution of not again parting with his pertinacious opponent. He aimed a deadly blow at the helmet of the Hungarian magnat : Count Dobus reeled, and the arm of the invincible cavalier was raised to repeat the stroke, when another sword was suddenly interposed. "So, ho!" cried the voice of the fearful knight, who, making a sort of sarcastic inclination of the head, confronted with an horrific laugh his fresh assailant. "So, ho!— thou scornest to make thy exit by drowning, hey;

well, thou shalt die a soldier's death, since 'tis thy fancy. There, old John Banffy, to the devil with thee!"

The hasty discharge of his carabine was the reply of the Hungarian, which took effect, *not* on the person of the mailed knight; his charger sprang upwards, and then plunged headlong on the plain. Even as the phantom rider touched the earth, his unerring axe besprent the thin grizzled hair of the aged chieftain with gore and brains. Banffy fell, and the torrent of battle rolled over him for a pall. None marked the veteran's end.* His conqueror backed his war-horse. And now the conflict, that had been sustained for several hours, deepened. The thinned, but determined band of patriots serried their ranks still closer, as if imbued with that courage, and "longing after immortality," which inspired the Getæ† of yore.

* For the death of John Banffy, see Istuanff. lib. xii. p. 190. 22,

† *The Getæ*, whom Arrian calls the Dacians, THE ANCESTORS OF MARTINUZZI'S LITTLE PHALANX. For an account of these people and their god, Zamolxis, see the fourth book of Herodotus. Gibbon says of them, "To the strength and fierceness of barbarians, they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality of the soul."—The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. i. vol. 1.

Their peculiar religious tenets were well adapted to excite to heroic deeds; nor, although they carried them to the verge of self-immolation, do they stand alone in history in this respect. In other countries, and in all ages, the soul's yearning after its proper immortality has produced similar effects. But that this faith, however exalted, should obtain such an influence over the imagination of any human being, as to prompt him, in cold blood, to commit suicide, would, we think, be put out of the pale of possibilities, if one example at the least did not stand upon record. We do not here allude to the Gymno-sophists, (who, Apuleius tells us, were wont, *when satiated with this life* to prove their faith in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, by the ordeal of the flames); but to a lament which Callimachus makes over a certain Ambraciot: "Quem ait (says Cicero) cum ei nihil accedisset adversi, è muro se in mare abjecisse, *lecto Platonis libri.*"—Cic. Tusc. Disp. i. 24.

The watery mode of exit, however, which is here assigned, does not seem warranted by any expression in the original, which merely says "From the lofty rampart he plunged to-night."

Ἡλατ' ἀφ' ὑφηλα τειχεος εις Αιδην.

It is remarkable, that the writings of Plato furnish no sufficient ex-

Answering every signal, word, or look of their beloved regent, and faithful unto the end, they clung round the

cuse for the rash act of this zealot. We find, indeed, that Cato, on the eve of putting an end to his existence, reverted to his favourite philosophy, but such studies were not "the causer" of that haughty stoic's death, at least not immediately. Besides, in his regard, there might be pleaded a moral necessity (the *αναγκη*), which inferred the *σημειον* or permission of his genius,.. "the divinity which stirred within; "the apprehension of disgrace, the *το αιδημον*, insisted on afterwards in Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus; the *αιχυνη*, which (if inevitable) constituted the third limitation of Plato, and which, as Cicero observed, was peculiarly applicable to the gravitas, or, as Dion renders it, the *εχυρογνωμοσυνη* of Cato. So that even St. Augustine, when he professedly inveighs against "self-slaughter," makes a special exception in favour of "the fact" of him of Uttica. De Civ. Dei, lib. vi. 26. But, contrariwise, the deed of the fanatic, Cleombrotus, was utterly unjustifiable, on the very grounds, wherefore it was enacted. According to the Platonic hypothesis, this man rendered himself guilty of the piacular *βια*; subjecting his immaterial part eternally to the demons of *υλη*, (as the soul of Samuel was *temporarily* molested by the witch of Endor,..the separated soul being obnoxious to such evocation of demons or necromancers was the origin, according to St. Justin Martyr, of the prayers of the church for the departed); ranking among the Biathanatoi, such as forcibly broke their corporeal bonds, (the soul being in the flesh *ως εν τινι φρυρᾳ*) under the excitement of fear or hope, and who were incapacitated by their passions, as Macrobius well observes in his Commentary on Cicero's Somnium Scipionis, "Quia spes sicut timor passio est;" for ever ascending from the *σκοτος εξωτερος*, into heaven. These passions were the corpora pestes of Virgil; the *κινυες* in the oracles, the *κηρες* in Philo and elsewhere, the material fæculencies of the fathers. Cicero's words, in the work above-cited, are decisive of his reading of Plato. "Nisi Deus hic, cujus hoc templum est, omne quod conspicis, istis te corporis custodiis liberaverit, huc tibi aditus patere non potest."

What abortive enthusiasm! for a man to sacrifice his life through faith in a philosophy, which expressly condemned self-murder, so that the very martyrdom, whereby he trusted to anticipate his felicity, interposed a perpetual barrier from the habitation of the blessed. Our blessed Saviour (be it remarked with reverence), was far from discouraging his disciples from confessing him, even unto death. Adopting the very word, which made the reproach with the heathen philosopher, he uses it as a term of commendation.—See Matthew, chap. xi. ver. 12, and St. Luke chap. xvi. ver. 16.

In fact their being Biathanatoi was the opprobrious appellative wherewith their cruel adversaries stigmatized the primitive Christians.—See

standard of their country, as if (like a parent who watches over, striving to avert, the mortal agony of his child,) they had never dreamed till that moment, how devotedly they loved it.

Count Turascus, who, for some time had joined the battle, now reached the side of Martinuzzi. His face and clothes were marked with blood, his right arm, shattered, lay hanging by his side ; with his left, he wielded his sword.

" What thinkest thou," said the regent, " will Count Zrinii yet return to aid us in this strait ?"

Turascus mournfully shook his head. " If," he replied, " some accident had not occurred, Count Zrinii would have made his force available, ere this."

As he spake these words, a mailed rider, whose blood

St. Cyprian, Ep. xxii. St. Ignatius ad Rom.,—Eusebius,—the Hymns of Prudentius, &c. &c.

The felo de se of the Ambraciot, cannot, therefore, be palliated by the authority of Plato. When Lord Byron talks, in Don Juan, of what his " confounded phantasies" had " paved the way to," suicide was not in his contemplation. The truth is, however, on reconsideration, (and such a latitude have the exceptions) that the Phædon of that philosopher, might be made to tell either way, according to the predisposition of the reader. The religious phrenzy of the Donatists in the middle of the fourth century, as related by Tillemont from Augustin, Mem. Eccles. tom. vi. although of a very extraordinary kind, is to be discriminated from that we have under review, by many shades of difference. These suicides, quoted in their justification, 2nd Macabees, c. 14, alleging the example of Razias ; we believe also, of Eleazar, and of the companions of Josephus in Jotapata, and of another Eleazar in Massada. In reference to this subject, Montesquieu, Esprit des Loix, liv. xxiv. chap. 19. has a curious note. But, revennons à nos moutons. The Pannonians, who, for what we can see, comprehended all the Getæ north of the Danube, were, for a period, the dread of Rome, herself. See Appian's Roman Wars. A passage, in book, headed ΡΩΜΑΙΚΩΝ ΙΛΛΥΡΙΚΗ, describes the terror, with which the defeat of Cornelius filled all Italy. And still later, such was the sensation caused by their hostile incursions, that, to cite the words of Paterculus, " Ut stabilem illum et firmatum tantorum bellorum experientia Cæsaris Augusti animum quateret atque terreret." Hist. Rom. lib. ii. c. 110. These psychologick barbarians were the ancestors of the brave men, who stood by Martinuzzi in the battle of Coloswar.

streamed through every pore of his hacked harness, and whose horse's flank and poitrel were struck through with arrows, was observed, darting towards the spot with amazing velocity, and he only drew in bridle, as the last spring of his reeling steed placed him by the side of the regent.

" Your father ? — his squadron ? — where is the left wing ?" demanded Turascus, with breathless eagerness.

" Deserted, to a man !" faintly replied Balthazar Zrinii, — for it was he. " My father is made prisoner; *and I* —" The gallant and martyred messenger sunk senseless on the earth.

"Count Turascus," observed Martinuzzi, in a calm voice, and with that slight, but resolved smile, which bespoke the soul collected in itself, " when men can do no more, they must needs yield to fate. I would fain, if possible, accomplish a retreat on Coloswar, while still these few remaining gallant fellows are left to me; but, so contagious appears this fatal spirit of defection, that I even question, whether the madness have not reached the fortress. Besides, Mircè, the surviving castellan, is the creature of ——; no matter. Count Turascus, I were loath to risk the ensign I carry, by stirring from this post, unless I were assured, the beleaguered fortress, which I have vainly striven to relieve, presented a place of refuge."

" Allow me, your eminence, to do your errand," said Turascus.

" Ever daring as thou art honourable !" cried Martinuzzi, — " with thanks I accept your proffer."

The count, putting his horse into motion, bowed. Martinuzzi observed him turn pale and totter ; a bullet, at that instant, had struck him mortally; he dropped from his horse. " Hungaria !" inarticulately murmured on the lip of the patriot, and his last draught of vital air was drawn in the effort.

" Death, this day, is holding his revels," half spoke,

half thought, Martinuzzi. "Prithee," he said, addressing himself to one of his aides-de-camp, "try to ride down to the gates of Coloswar, and ascertain their disposition within the walls, — you understand me?"

The young officer signified his comprehension and obedience, and rode furiously off in the direction of the city. The patriots still stood their last rallying ground, like so many lions at bay. A fierce, and impenetrable front, did this impacted body of devoted men present, to the repeated charges of the imperialists, while, what was most painful to the feelings of Martinuzzi, the insurgent Hungarians closed, with shouts of defiance, on their countrymen.

> "Strange! that angel should with angel war,
> And in fierce hostings meet."*

And now, the squadrons of Castaldo and Count Salm, having wheeled round the brow of the hill, assailed his iron ranks in the rear. Corps after corps did the marquis bring up, in person, to support his furious and repeated attacks, which, like the successive billows of a tempestuous ocean, at length breached the bulwark of the Hungarian phalanx. Martinuzzi threw himself among the broken troops; he was warmly seconded by Count Dobus, and, animated by the exhortations and example of their leaders, the brave defenders of their country were nerved with triple vigour. The imperialists were beaten back; but, in the impetuous heat of the fight, Martinuzzi had involved himself in the adverse ranks, and was surrounded. Never, since the standard of Hungary first heavily oped and closed its silken volumes, had it been in such danger, as at this moment. Many a lance was directed against the regent, and many an arm was stretched forth to clutch the stave of that banner, whose ample folds now drooped to the ground. Martinuzzi backed his horse in the midst of this threatening

* Milton.

storm. The two Austrian leaders encouraged their men to press forward. The foremost of these celebrated captains resolutely opposed himself to Martinuzzi, who well knew his adversary,—it was Castaldo. The sight seemed to inspire the regent with the courage and strength of a host. "*Ambassador!*" he exclaimed, with taunting indignation, "take thy reward!" and the spear of the marquis was shattered in shivers. Setting his teeth hard, Martinuzzi pressed his advantage, and, the next instant, the blood of the Italian general stained his falchion. Castaldo closed upon his antagonist, and, in the fierce grapple which ensued, snatched at the jewelled hilt of a dirk, that hung in Martinuzzi's vesture. He drew it forth, but, even while the weapon gleamed on high, sense and soul alike reeled, and the blow fell wide of its mark. The fainting Italian sunk to the ground, wounded, but not mortally. Meanwhile, the warlike prelate would have fallen back upon his battalion, but again his retreat was intercepted by a hostile arm. Martinuzzi closed upon this fresh adversary. The combat was of short duration, — only a few strokes were parried on either side, ere the steel cap of the Austrian was cleft, from plume to gorget. Thus perished the Count de Salm, the second in command of the imperialists.

By this time, the Count Dobus and others, who saw the danger in which the standard was placed, had pushed beyond the Hungarian ranks, to extricate the regent from his difficulty. In this they fully succeeded. The imperialists were forced back, but, just as Martinuzzi was disengaged from the hostile press, he found, he had to encounter an unlooked-for antagonist. A war-charger, clearing the lances of the enemy, and bursting through the protending spears of a thousand foemen, bore right onward, from one end of the panic-struck battalion to the other. Wielding, with Herculean strength, his tremendous battle-axe, the rider smote and overthrew all before him, down a broad lane, cleared through whole

ranks of his opponents, trampling on the living, the dying, and the dead, with like indifference; nor did he draw in rein, till the noble animal he bestrode, leaping forwards four yards at a bound, fairly planted him alongside of the royal standard. "Turn thee, cardinal!" he shouted, in a voice louder than the loud battle, — "turn and meet thy fate!"

Martinuzzi fronted the challenger, and beheld that image of death, swinging around his head, his dreadful battle-axe; in person unwounded, and unscathed, but having his coat-of-mail dyed, in one hue incarnadine, from plume to spur. For the first time during that terrible fight, the countenance of Martinuzzi lost the entire tranquillity, which all along, till then, had sat upon it. His brow slightly flushed, and he hastily raised his arm, as if to accept the challenge, but, in a moment, seeming to recollect himself, he lowered his weapon again, saying, in a low, deep, and almost melancholy tone, "Count Ragotzy, tempt me not, — *you* may not meet your death from *my* hand, *nor I*, mine from *thine!*"

With these words, and casting on his challenger a transitory glance of indescribable emotion, he turned away; and, at that moment, Count Dobus again threw himself across the brigand's path, and attacked him hand to hand. Brief was the combat; the Hungarian was prostrated, by a deep wound on the skull, and the thickening throng of battle bore the victor onward. Dealing death on all sides, he himself escaped from every effort against his life; so that he seemed, as was fabled of certain of the *Dii indigetes** of old, to be cased or circumfused in some invulnerable armature. Many a gallant spirit his prowess hurried to bliss or bane, and the Counts Horwith and Tury, who had singled him out,

* Dii indigetes.—What rank should be allotted to these amphibious immortals, is still, we believe, a question. Cicero (lib. ii. de Legib.) enumerates three orders of the gods, and places the above along with the Semi-dii.

in hopes that their combined strength might stop his desolating career, were both, nearly at the same instant, prostrated from their seats, and left for dead by their invincible adversary. The affrighted ranks staggered, or drew aside, wherever the stream of victorious battle chanced to bear the spectral cavalier, and soon an obscure and terrible rumour spread through the horrified battalion. The belief arose, and grew, and gathered on all sides, that no mortal arm wielded that clottered battle-axe; but that the emblematic panoply shrouded some departed warrior, upon whose impassable front, blade and bullet were spent in vain.

"I know that chap too well," remarked a serjeant of the body-guard, in a hushed whisper, to his nearest comrade, — "let's turn our swords on vulnerable stuff. Such as he, without flesh and blood, is no safe subject for cold iron. Stand on one side, — these ghosts ever keep to a right line, for all the world, like a mad wolf-dog."

"You know him?" repeated the other, — "how can that be?"

"I mean," replied the serjeant, grasping the shoulder of the man with a convulsive strength, that contributed not a little to impress his fellow-comrade, with the like superstitious terror, which had obtained the mastery over his own bosom; "I have set eyes on him before; — he's one of the familiar spirits of Father Dominick; there be three of them. Many a night, and oft, I've seen them hold communion without the walls, when I have kept guard on the ramparts of Hermanstadt, — only think of that!"

The man did think of it, and speak of it too, and the wild report went shuddering through the ranks, that Father Dominick, or some spirit incarnate, linked and mated with him in unutterable league, was in the field. What fire and sword failed to accomplish, this petrifying persuasion wrought in an instant. Men, whom no mortal odds could terrify, felt their hearts collapse at the apprehension of having to encounter this single intrenchant enemy.

The panic, that followed, became universal, and made the climax of the day's reverses. An electric chill ran through the hearts of all; the men fled not indeed, because, on every side, they were encompassed; nor did they offer to surrender, partly, for that the phantom knight had set up his cry of "*Point-de-quartier!*" and partly, because they were a brave and well-disciplined body of men, to whom the idea of yielding was worse than death; but they fought on to little purpose; — their moral courage was prostrated, and they suffered themselves to be slaughtered, like a flock of sheep. The common soldiers stood inactive, and waited the repeated charges of the imperial cavalry, in sullen and silent despair, while many of the first nobility of Hungary became so many voluntary sacrifices, and, with dreadful yell, precipitated themselves on the protended lances of their foes, "as eager to anticipate their grave."

In this general ruin, *one* man at least stood firm, and what skill and valour could accomplish, to arrest the flood of victory, was put forth by Martinuzzi, on this memorable day,—*his* presence was in all parts of the field, and he communicated his spirit in a voice, that outrang the fierce elements of battle, rising audibly over the thunders of war, and the sustained and redoubled shouts of the assailing force— *his* flag waved its volumes over his few and last adherents, like some precious talisman. Fainting with fatigue and wounds, the Hungarian patriot would murmur cheers and blessings, as Martinuzzi passed, and even the sunken eyes of such, as lay gasping in the last agony, would seek out, through the film of death, that consecrated banner. They viewed it, as the type of hope and consolation, bearing the assurance to their departing spirits, that, however they had lived, they at least had fallen holily, and had spilt their blood, not vainly, presenting, in the manner of their death, the most sacred spectacle to Heaven that earth can exhibit;—*that of patriots perishing together, in God's name, in defence of their country.* The regent of Hungary was vaulting

into the seat of the fourth steed, he had that day bestrode, when the scout, he had sent forth to collect intelligence, pressed to his side.

"Now, gallant gentleman and true, how goes it in the city?" demanded Martinuzzi.

"I regret to report to your eminence, that the gates of Coloswar are closed against you. Mircè threatens, that the guns of the defences will be opened, indiscriminately, on your force, and on that of Piadena, under the absurd pretence of holding out the fortress for the Lady Czerina."

"I feared as much," rejoined Martinuzzi, "but do not," he added, putting his finger on his lips, "speak of this to others, gallant sir,—and since we are precluded from all succour in that quarter, let us make the last battle field of Hungary remembered." Saying these words, Martinuzzi galloped into the hottest of the fight.

His battle array was by this time fearfully diminished—thousands upon thousands of his best troops had fallen, and his little phalanx, now almost entirely composed of gentlemen of descent, environed by a superior and victorious enemy, was melting away before their harassing and destructive operations, like some alpine mound, under solstitial sunshine. Once, for an anxious moment, the thought of capitulation crossed the regent's mind; it came like a ghost unbidden, and was exorcised with indignation, by that spirit of patriotism, that welled up from the bottom of his soul, like holy incense. "Not while this arm can carry its honourable charge," he said internally; "the royal banner, that for so many centuries hath braved the battle, through fortune and defeat, shall not in its last agony, be dishonoured by Martinuzzi."

At that moment, he was again confronted by the Cygani leader,—he frowned, and waving his hand in wrath, would have turned his horse's head in another direction, but Count Ragotzy persisted in accosting him.

"My lord cardinal," he hissed in the regent's ear, "hearken to me—even in this hour of apparent ruin," he

proceeded, in a breathless whisper, "I can avert your fate. On one condition, I will bear you and your followers from the field, in safety, if not in triumph. A word of mine, that I *could* speak to these Hungarians, who have turned upon you, would make them return to their allegiance. Shall I speak *that* word?"

"*Thou!*—no! Ingrate! and yet name your condition!"

"That you will exert all the authority hereafter vested in you, whether as regent or king, to hunt down the false madman, who calls himself Count Rodna, to death—mark me—to death!"

Martinuzzi was strangely struck. After a minute's pause, he replied, "I reject safety on such terms."

Count Ragotzy bit his lip.—"Well then, cardinal," he said, "come with me; I will bear you and the standard of Hungary, through the fray unharmed."

"And these my gallant soldiers?"

"Let them perish in their obstinacy," replied Ragotzy.

"That thou wert brave, I knew," said Martinuzzi with indignant vehemence, "but I guessed not till this moment, how daring.—Propose such terms to ME! Out of my sight, audacious ——!"

"Thou art doomed, cardinal," muttered Count Ragotzy, through his clenched teeth. "Thy last chance thrown away, nor heaven, earth, nor hell, can save thee now." He turned away to his deluded troops—"Charge! followers of Raoul!" he exclaimed, "and wrest your standard from the grasp of the tyrant!"

The incendiary Hungarians charged anew, seconded by a final assault of the imperialists; who, at thesame time, however, solicited their enemies to accept of quarter. In the mêlée, Martinuzzi's horse sunk under him. He was instantly raised, and assisted by the officers of his staff to another steed, and the rent "evolvements" of the standard of Hungary again swung over this little body of devoted men,..but its silken folds were now envermeiled with the regent's blood; and his voice grew fainter, and his spear waved languidly; as he was remounting,—he had

been wounded in his side by a musket shot,—in his eagerness, he at first hardly regarded it, but soon afterwards, he felt himself every moment becoming feebler and feebler.

And now the tragedy of that bloody day seemed approaching its catastrophe. At whatever sacrifice of life, Austria had obtained the victory, the result would be more than equivalent. Skilfully improved, the whole country would be laid open to the conqueror, Coloswar must surrender, and Ferdinand—"yes," thought Castaldo, as debilitated from his wounds, he rested in his camp in a distant part of the field, every moment expecting to receive the intelligence of the surrender, or death of the regent. "Yes; Ferdinand will owe to me the acquisition of Transylvania!" Even as these words murmured on his lips, he heard the clatter of horses' hoofs. It came on like the sound of a torrent,—there was some confusion without the marquee. "They bring me an account of the victory," he exultingly exclaimed, "and have come to present to me the standard of Hungary." Weak as he was, he started to his feet, eager to be certified of the reality of his triumph; and, with an air of military grandeur, advanced a step, to welcome the glorious trophy.

"Guard the entrance!" exclaimed a loud and commanding voice, and at the instant, a knight, clad in a complete suit of mail, with his sword drawn, passed hastily into the tent. The vizor of his helmet was up, and displayed a countenance, eloquent of high thoughts, and lofty daring. He was young, very young, and on every conspicuously handsome feature was stamped the genuine lines of nobility, virtue, and intelligence. This unknown chieftain moved towards Castaldo, with the quick and assured step of an equal, if not a superior.

"Marquis of Piadena," he commenced, after a slight salutation, and in a tone of stern formality; "your army, to a man, is in my power: if you would save a needless effusion of blood, you will send orders that your troops lay down their arms,—for yourself, my lord, you are my prisoner."

Castaldo gazed on the noble shape,—the well proportioned limbs, and splendid accoutrements of his visitor vacantly, like one stunned. "What mean you?—I understand you not. Who, in the name of God, are you, sir?" he exclaimed, with some incoherency, turning pale, and in the very excess of consternation.

"I have no time to spare for words," answered the chieftain:—"Enough, my lord; your auxiliaries, under Don Leon, have already yielded to superior numbers. Count Zrinii and Quendi Ferens are freed, and, at the head of their liberated countrymen, are charging down the hill,—Count Nadastis, and those who went over to you with him, have declared against you, and will shortly recover the Abbey of Coloswar. I have ten thousand brave fellows under my individual command,—my lord, I say,—enough. Will you send orders to your forces to surrender?"

Castaldo would have expostulated,—"If I understand; allow me time," he began in breathless anxiety.

"Take your own time, my lord,—mine is too precious to waste with you, in further emparlance. I must break this conference short. The imperialists may receive quarter, what time they choose to ask for it,—but no honours of war, *guns, baggage, colours, military stores,—all must be delivered over into my possession. Every man must yield himself prisoner of war.* These are the terms of capitulation, which you may accept, when you think proper. You have my last word,—adieu,—*au revoir.*"

The unknown officer quitted the tent. The high ground without was covered with men-at-arms, formed in battle array.

"My brave friends and followers!" cried the young knight, addressing himself to these; "the kingdom of Hungary has been basely betrayed, and is in danger of destruction. Will you accompany me to her deliverance!" A loud shout of acquiescence was the answer. "Many among you," continued the cavalier; "were born in this province,—many themselves are sons of Hungary

I, your Richter, first saw the light in Buda. I swear that Austria, with my consent, shall never swallow up my native country. Such is my will. Is it your determination also?" Another shout of acclamation made the required response. "Then, forward, my gallant followers to the rescue!—the national ensign yet waves on high. Blessed be the hand that upholds that stave!—ay," he murmured to himself; "though the hand should be *his*,—upon them! while that flag is still unfurled. Advance banner!—forward!—and voice aloud the war-cry, whose acclaim hath never yet been followed by defeature,—send the word through the ranks,—the Richter Iwan! Iwan, and victory!"

The whole troop gave back the terrible thunder of those sounds, and dashing adown the valley in a compact mass, the shout was wafted by a thousand voices on the wind to heaven,—"THE VILEZ IWAN TO THE RESCUE!—IWAN FOR HUNGARY!—IWAN AND VICTORY!"

Wounded and faint, Martinuzzi with difficulty sat his horse, with difficulty he held the standard aloft, but however exhausted, he *did* uphold it. His men fought no longer for victory or safety; but for honourable death. The battle relaxed on all sides,—the imperialists seemed weary of slaying; and the Hungarians, though they would not yield, scarcely offered any resistance. Suddenly, the regent's eye was attracted by an unusual appearance beyond the brow of the hill, where the Austrians had been posted in the beginning of the action. Columns of vast power, and apparently extensive depth, appeared partially visible among the interstices of the wooded country, in the distance. Whilst nearer, living masses of men, to be counted apparently by thousands, were seen emerging from the defiles of the undulating ground. The countenance of Martinuzzi instantly became radiant, as that of an angel.

"Do my senses deceive me?" he said, addressing himself to Count Barcotius, who, observing his weakness, had just vainly proffered his aid, to relieve him of the

banner; "or does not yonder apparition, on the hill-edge, take the form of armed men? And, among them, do I not descry the troop of Zrinii, hastening to our assistance?"

"It seems so, indeed, your eminence," replied Barcotius; "what miracle can this be?"

"Here is one who may perhaps explain," said Martinuzzi, as an aide-de-camp, who had fought his way to their side, came up.

"If your highness can stand your ground for many minutes longer," said the officer; "Count Zrinii will operate a diversion in your favour,—his battle is re-ordered,— *the Moldavian Richter is in the field*,—and the day is your own."

Martinuzzi bowed his head. "Glory to God," he said, with affecting solemnity, and turned his horse away, to conceal his emotion.

"The Moldavian Richter," repeated Barcotius; "who, or what is he?"

"Iwan, whom the people surname, the Vilez,—*et alter Mars ut isti volunt*,"* replied the messenger; "he comes on in formidable array. The imperialists must be annihilated."

He augured truly. Already wearied with their long and obstinate struggle, and surrounded, as by miracle, by an enemy, they had looked upon as vanquished; considerably reduced in numbers,—their Spanish allies admitted to quarter,..the second in command fallen,.. Castaldo a prisoner. And deprived of their principal officers, who could alone inspirit them to prolong the fight,—there now appeared no other resource to the imperialists, than surrender.

As matters stood, the liberated corps d'armée of Zrinii, Quendi Ferens, and Nadastis, would have amply redeem-

* The reader will please to remember, that the Latin tongue is, and was familiarly spoken in the principality where our scene is laid. The officer's quoting the appellation which Livy applied to his favourite, Scipio Africanus, must have been accidental.

ed the day, without the accession of Richter Iwan's force, "fresh, vigorous, and invincible."* The imperialists threw down their arms, by hundreds and by thousands, and the whole face of the field was utterly reversed. Here and there, indeed, a few isolated bodies of men were seen, obstinately contending against overwhelming odds; and the insurgent Hungarians, either through very spleen, or the sense of their having taken an irretrievable step, persevered in their resistance; but, with these exceptions, the battle came to a pause.

The representations of the Hungarian magnats had speedily excited the inhabitants of Coloswar, to take up arms against their castellan. He was cast into prison, and the city portals were thrown open, to receive the long file of prisoners of war, and the wounded, and the dying of both armies.

Till now, Martinuzzi had borne up manfully against his increasing exhaustion; but when the fortune of war, after all her vacillation, seemed to pronounce so unequivocally in his favour, the energy, which had hitherto supported him, failed. On the brink of insensibility, he sunk upon his saddle. At that moment, certain principal captains of the Moldavians rode up. One, a little a-head of the others, moved his horse forwards, that he might relieve the regent of the standard. Martinuzzi felt himself waxing sensibly weaker, but only held the colours nearer to him, and with a firmer grasp.

"Where," said the regent, "is Barcotius? Where Horwith? Where ——" His voice was lost in faintness.

"Your eminence," said the vizored captain, "entrust me with the royal ensign, and I will uphold it for the honour of Hungary."

"Ha! what voice is that?" said Martinuzzi. "Where are my officers? Who art thou, sir?"

"I am the Moldavian Richter—my name is Iwan," answered the chief, slightly inclining his head, and making a motion to receive the banner.

* Gibbon.

"Would I were stronger, to express my thanks, noble sir, for this hour's deliverance," said Martinuzzi; "but for the standard, though its charge were short of your deservings, I can transfer it to no hands, not owing allegiance to Hungary; and thou, I trow, dost not lay claim to be a subject of these realms?"

"A subject?—*not a subject*," replied Iwan.

"To our sorrow, most gallant gentleman; thy splendid reputation knolls in the ear o' the land, and the highest rank in Hungary shall be thine. The diet, doubtless, will not be backward to confer on you the rights of citizenship;* and we hope, but not now—Barcotius, take thou the ensign, for I am sick with the loss of blood, and bear me to Coloswar, and——"

Too spent to utter more, Martinuzzi resigned the flag-staff into the hands of Count Barcotius, and was carried off the ground, almost in a state of unconsciousness.

Meanwhile, the rebel Hungarians fought like men, who were conscious, that the mortal blight of rebellion stained their cause. The Cygani leader, who seemed to multiply himself by the rapidity of his movements, soon carried the like awe into the breasts of his fresh antagonists, as that, with which he had inspired the troops of Martinuzzi. He had exchanged his former weapon for a falchion, which flamed in the van of his own battle, and in the dense ranks of the enemy, like the trenchant sword of the destroying angel. The same wild report, that had before paralyzed men's arms, and drank up their courage, got wind, and sat like an electric spell on the whole Moldavian army. Ably seconded by his insurgent force, he produced such an impression on the enemy's ranks, that at length they were compelled to yield ground. None dared stand to encounter inevitable death, and since the celerity of the knight's movements endowed him with all

* C'est dans l'assemblée des etats qu'on accorde droit de Bourgeoisie aux étrangers qui le recherchent. Quand le roi crée quelqu'un noble de Hongrie, le nouveau noble n'acquiert pas pour cela droit de Bourgeoisie.—Bibliothéque Raisonnée.

the advantage and appearance of ubiquity, panic and disorder were presently wrought in the Moldavian ranks, many fled outright, leaving death and dismay behind them, while Count Ragotzy, rejoicing in his invulnerability, rode on over the red field of slaughter, smiting, and slaying, and trampling down, under his horse's hoofs, like some avenging deity.

> "Oh! where was 'Iwan' then?
> One blast upon his bugle horn
> Were worth a thousand men." *

And where is Iwan? Imagining that his presence would not be required in aid of a victory, that, from the all but universal surrender of the enemy, he deemed already gained, he had left his army in the command of one of his officers, and, escorted by a small troop, had entered the fortress of Coloswar, to transact an important matter, the particulars of which, so far as are necessary to be known, the reader may presently learn.

Meanwhile, Count Ragotzy brandished his terrible falchion, right and left, against the slackening foe. Two of the commanding officers of the Moldavians had successively forfeited their lives, in the act of rallying their broken troops, and shortly, *a third*, encouraging his men to stand the assault of Ragotzy, placed himself, right in the path of the invincible leader, as if ambitious of encountering death, from the same unrelenting hand.

Ragotzy remarked the enemy forming anew, and, discovering the cause, in the exhortations of the vizored officer, who now threw himself into the gap of battle, thus in haughty tones bespoke his new opponent:

"Sir knight, set not the men a bad example, but let them make off as they best may, and do thou take the lead; trust me, I shall not spare thee for thy youthfulness, for I have vowed, this day, my sword to embrue in the blood of all who oppose my passage, thy lack of beard

* The Lady of the Lake.

is no saving clause, look to it, and let thy horse's hoofs manifest thy wit."

"I cannot, courteous ruffian, take thy counsel," returned the knight; "you wear a cognizance, in your helmet, that sets my heart on fire, and which I am bound to challenge,—*that gory tartan!*"

"Ha!" exclaimed Ragotzy, "then thou art——"

The noble form of the knight, seemed to dilate into majesty. "I am called," he said, in a fierce, and somewhat proud tone, and griping his sword firmly, "the Richter Iwan, and there's thy glove! Villain! more murderous and inhuman, than tongue can proclaim thee, take, from this arm, the hoarded vengeance of a life. Stand to thy guard!"

Count Ragotzy backed his horse some paces, and then cried out, after a laugh of derision; "By the souls of the slain! I am in luck to-day. Yet, prithee, a last word, ere your tongue wag less fiercely. There is among your followers, a flighty *kanactz*,—the same, I mean, who bore you my gage. I have sought him in the field, in vain. Where is that man?"

"I deign not to parley with thee, homicide," replied Iwan, again spurring his steed forward.

"Oh, well!" said Ragotzy; "since thy blood is so fiery, I'll cool it for thee; and when thou meetest the shade of the heroic Peter, say to him, that Alaric Polgar thus avenged his fall."

Uttering these words, the Cygani leader couched his lance, and plunging the rowels in his charger, precipitated himself on the richter with such sudden impetuosity, as to bear down horse and rider in the shock. He had been met, however, as fiercely; his own steed was overthrown, and he lay rolling on the greensward. Instantaneously, as it were, these two bold and untamed spirits were seen, foot to foot, on the blood-strewn plain. There they stood, fronting one another, in rigid and unyielding attitude, both animated with the same resolu-

tion, of not letting his opponent escape his vengeance. For more than a minute, each regarded the other with stern and steady gaze, but the soul of neither quailed, in the least, before his formidable antagonist. At length Count Ragotzy broke the spell of this exquisite *tableau*, by suddenly attempting a pass. It was parried, and the fight was renewed ;— surely never, before or since, were such accomplished swordsmen, so equally matched. Perhaps, however, this equality would not have existed, had not Ragotzy been somewhat wearied, with so many hours hard fighting. As it was, it long appeared impossible to infer victory or defeat, on either side. Both combatants entertained such respect for their antagonist's powers, that they refrained from putting forth the entire of their strength, or risking the event of the duel, by attempting any premature and unguarded pass, which, if it missed its attaint, would probably be fatally requited. Thus the combat presented a pure exhibition of skill and power, between these respective champions of the two armies, and so completely was it felt, that on the result of this single passage, must depend the issue of the general action, that their followers, on either side, hung over the combat in anxious suspense, and, as by some tacit understanding, gave over fighting.

It seemed, however, that Count Ragotzy's temperament ill endured the continued admonishment, with which his science and experience sought to bridle his natural impetuosity; he made more than one passado, which, though they were avoided by the other's dexterous swordsmanship, the richter's instant aim of advantaging by their failure, was, in turn, baffled by the equal agility and promptitude of his adversary. No blood had yet been drawn on either side, when, grown indignant, at the unwonted circumstance of being held so long at sword's point, by a single foeman, and, probably, emboldened by the impunity which attended his previous lunges, Ragotzy, suddenly, made a desperate home-

thrust at Iwan, and, yielding rather to his passion, than taking counsel from his judgment, instead of retiring, on its being parried, he closed upon the richter, whose spear impierced his coat of mail —

> "The griding sword, with discontinuous wound,
> Passed through him." *

Count Ragotzy sunk upon the plain, and the life-blood, which gushed from between the joints of his armour, was not this time that of a foeman. The Richter Iwan, toil-spent with the contest, approached, and leaned on his spear over the prostrate leader, whose mortal life, apparently, had gone forth in that gushing tide. Some near, unclasped the rivets of his gorget, and threw open his vizor. The fresh air, blowing upon his stony countenance, recovered him to a transitory consciousness. His dark eye rested on the crimsoned luminary, then just in the final act of dipping into the black, thick, volume of congregated vapour, that rolled along the level west, like the visible exhalation of some volcanic abyss. What dread auguries lie often, half-disclosed, in the changeful colour, shape, and motion of the meteors of the air; the fleeting combinations of that magnificent system of material signs, which we inhabit! typifying, with most miraculous organ, the lot of humanity.

Count Ragotzy might, perhaps, have read, in the skiey influences of that hour, at once an omen and a type of his own destiny. Wherever dwelt his thoughts, whither, on the untrod futurity, his adventurous soul was about to explore, or, trammelled by the clinging interests of time, they found refuge, like the son of Osiris, on some bright floating isle † in the deep sea of remembrance, some

* Milton.

† Floating isle.—There are (or have been) more things on earth, than are dreamt of in men's philosophy, now-a-days. The evidence for these "lusus terræ" would seem to rest on good authority. See Pliny Secun-



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sacred *Chemmis*,* where his heart may have anchored, ere the waves of sin and sorrow broke over, and engulfed it; some insular period of puerile innocence, that, if not sanctified by holy writ, had been, at least, illumined by the sublimities of classic lore; wherever were his thoughts, whether they shot back to those days of comparative guiltlessness, and whether regret made any part of his fleeting reverie, He alone, who reads the heart of man, in its most unfathomable depths and stillest sanctuaries, can tell. The minute, perhaps, mercifully vouchsafed "in signum et in portentum,"† expired, and the dim eye of the Cygani turned from the sun's ominous setting, and lit on the face of the richter, who, with his vizor up, was bending over him; but the past and future were alike absorbed in the thoughts of the present, and his few remaining sands of life were shaken to their last scruple, as Count Ragotzy glared on the features of his antagonist, in whom he had now no difficulty of knowing his *fated* conqueror, Sigismund.

"Ha!" he cried, in faint accents, "it burst upon me, my mother's prophecy! I never believed in her before;—I do now."

"Count Ragotzy," said our hero, "before you die, make what reparation is in your power for the sins done in the flesh. I overheard you, in the vaults of Hermanstadt, acquaint your mother, you had stolen the regalia of Hungary from Coloswar; — where is it concealed?"

Ragotzy laughed, and the rattling in his throat, that sounded like the cacchination of some fallen angel,.. hor-

dus, 2. 95. seq. and Pliny the Consul, lib. viii. Ep. 20. and Theophr. Hist. Plant. iv. 13. Amstel. 1644. folio; and Seneca, Natur. Quæst. iii. 25.; and Varenius, who gives an account of certain floating islands in Honduras, Georg. vol. i. p. 412.; and Boethius, (not the poet, but) the Scottish historian, who affirms the same of Loch Lomond.

* Sacred Chemmis.—See Herod. Eur. This floating island seems to have been to Egypt what Ovid's "Erratica Delos" was to the Greeks.

† Isaiah viii. 18.

rible, discordant,—announced the hastened approaches of death. " You overheard, — YOU ! The regalia ! — ha ! ha ! ha !"

" Ay, tell me, I implore you ! where is the crown of Hungary ?"

" Oh, 'tis excellent ! And thou, also, lovest and wouldst wed her, you rescued from me erewhiles, — Veronica of Eissenburg ? — hey ? is't not so ?" As he thus spoke, an indescribable emotion played upon the countenance of the expiring brigand.

" Where," again demanded Sigismund,—" where have you hidden the diadem of St. Stephen ? — speak ! for God's sake, ere too late !"

" Oh, mother, — Unna !" resumed Ragotzy, without heeding the inquiry, " what a prophetess art thou ! and I never to believe in thee till now ! — 'tis long since thou foretoldst, that I should fall by the hand of the man, whom, ere he was conscious of his property in them, I had forestalled of his two dearest rights. I never recked thy augury before, but now I call it to mind ; — 'twas perfect ! excellent !"

" The regalia ?" cried Sigismund.

" True, the regalia !" repeated Ragotzy, contending, in broken syllables, with the ensanguined tide, that choked his utterance ; — " 'Tis thine by right, I trow ; and — and — well, if that is not, after all, a sweet legacy of vengeance !"

His head sank ; his nether-jaw dropped ; he strove again to look up,—in vain ; but still a bright, mysterious smile of fiendish exultation, flashed athwart his face, as the fierce and turbid spirit of the wicked Cygani sought the sphere of its nativity, . . *where* ? Like Beaufort, " he died and made no sign." * But let us repeat the aspiration of that prelate's death-bed witnesses, — " Oh, God, forgive him !"

* Second part of K. Henry VI., Act 3. Scene 3.

" Alas! my best hope of effecting this discovery dies with thee!" murmured Sigismund, with unutterable bitterness of feeling; " but let me tear my selfish regret from my heart, nor suffer it to absorb the remembrance of an imperative duty." He knelt down, and, removing the tartan from the helm of the lifeless Cygani, bathed it in his oozing wound; and then, uplifting the ensanguined shred to Heaven, he exclaimed, with melancholy fervour, " Sainted spirit of the murdered Rodna! I breathed on thy slaughtered manes, the incense of a solemn service; — my oath is now redeemed. In the blood of thine assassin I have dyed this last relic, that reminded me of thy kindness and thy fate. Rest in peace, gentle spirit! and look down in pity on the orphan, whom thy example first taught to love virtue!" Sigismund bowed his head, and wept in silence.

Meanwhile, the fortune of the day was decided. The fall of their leader put an end to the stand of the insurgent Hungarians; and such of the imperialists as had hitherto offered a desultory resistance, surrendered at discretion. The vicissitudes of the battle were over; the fight was won, and, soon after, the pall of darkness fell upon the scene.

" Vastum ubique silentium."*

" None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again."†

* Tacitus. † Lady of the Lake.

# MANUSCRIPT XXVI.

"Quæ in vita usurpant homines ea cuique in somno accedunt."
CICERO, *De Div.*

"O semper tacita sortes ambage malignæ,
Eventuque patens, et nescia vatibus ipsis
Veri sera fides!" CLAUDIAN.

"La virginité est un être moral, une vertu qui ne consiste que dans le pureté du cœur."
BUFFON.

"Though the world's fierce scorn shall call it infamy,
I say 'twas not."
FRANCES ANN KEMBLE.

"Quicquid tale factum fuerit, etsi retentam constantissimo animo pudicitiam non excutit, pudorem tamen incutit, ne credatur factum cum voluntate, quod fieri fortasse sine carnis aliquâ voluptate non potuit."
ST. AUGUSTIN, *de Civ. Dei.*

"As moderate afflictions bring tears, so immoderate take away tears, insomuch that sorrow becometh no sorrow, which, swallowing up the mind of the afflicted, taketh away the sense of the affliction."

WE must again shift the scene to the settlement of the Cyganis. The middle of the second night of Swartz's captivity, found that person stretched on his dungeon floor in a perturbed slumber. From his loud gasps, writhing limbs, and troublous expression of countenance, a watcher might have guessed, the sleeper to have been tossed to and fro, on those unreal depths, where the soul

seems to anchor, but all without a bottom. Those cares, passions, and interests, with which the mind is commonly agitated, seldom fail to get dashed together in the kaleidoscope of dreams, where are jumbled seriousness with impertinence, and mirth with gravity. Reason abdicates the throne of the soul. The imagination will shed the mockery of her promethean hues, over the incorporeal shadows of our waking thoughts, investing the chaotic transcript, with a fantastic semblance of reality.* Certain trains of thought, similar in character to what had busied Swartz's meditations for the last two days, naturally resumed, or rather prolonged, their influence over the faculties of his soul, during this her state of abstraction. His uncurbed spirit, disentangled in her operations, travelled back the course of time, retracing at a wish, each interval, and leaping every barrier, without even the consciousness of an impediment. By the magic felicity of dreams, the past lived anew in the present. He again was of the household of Countess Scœpas; again became the equerry of the young waivode, her son; again languished in secret, and felt himself the very slave of the too gentle Beatrice. He would stroll into the woods to tell his audacious love to the stars, as he was wont to do; he would return for very restlessness in being absent from the princess, to cast at awful distance, furtive glances on the object of his homage, or experience the delicious tremblings, into which her presence invariably threw him. And that remembrance, which made the demon of his life, visited his visions. He dreamed, they were sailing for pleasure on the lake,—himself, and his sweet sister Alicia, John of Zapola, and his sister, and the elève of the countess, that meditative boy, George Martinuzzi. All sat in the light skiff or *seel trinker*, with countenances, redeemed from the rottenness of death, or transformed from the wanness of carking cares, to the light of

* Sueno e sueno.—Calderon.

spring and life,.. to all the genial comeliness, proper to the May of existence. Suddenly the face of the heavens changed—a terrible squall came on, and the little vessel struck against a rock,—the young waivode swam to shore with his sister, the princess, and made good his landing. Martinuzzi, meanwhile, stemmed the fierce torrent, sustaining Alicia on his arm. The feeble equerry alone clung to the sinking raft; the waters rushed in with irresistible rapidity; and soon, upon the raging billows, he breathed a life, to which each second threatened a limit—heavily they rolled over him, the whirling waves, as he sank; then came the gurgle, the choaking, and the last convulsive grasp of the pent breath, that strove with the storm for utterance,—the cry reached the ears of Martinuzzi, who, consigning Alicia to the arms of her attendants, plunged, fearlessly, back into the lake, and again buffetted the tempestuous waves. Just as the brawling surge spake instant death, "the strong swimmer" dived beneath the foaming surface of the water, and having gripped the equerry by his clothes, soon rose again, bearing him, helpless and unconscious, to the shore.

This vision of the past rose to Swartz's sleeping faculties, with a depth and graduating of apprehension, truly terrific. Then, in regular order of time, he and the too amiable Alicia, poured forth, before their meek and noble-minded preserver, their warm acknowledgments for the debt of existence. Oh! how vivid, was the sleeping man's recollection of that scene! The mute demonstrations of thankfulness on the part of his susceptible sister, —his own louder protestations of undying gratitude, and Martinuzzi, looking on the while, with his radiant countenance, beaming his usual sweet, but somewhat pensive smile, which, the emanation of his own kind heart, fell softly, like sunshine from the level west, on the hearts of all about him. Yes, there was the self-same being, who, disclaiming all merit, breathed his gentle accents of self-depreciation, in their ears, whom he had lately rescued

from a watery grave. There shone the same open physiognomy, where all spake unhesitating "trustingness," and clear uncalculating faith. Not a shadow of distrust was there. Pure in his own integrity, he was incapable of entertaining any suspicion, against others. When the equerry loudly proclaimed, that he consecrated the energies of all to come of existence, in aid of the man, who had saved his life, the mild blue eyes of Martinuzzi, looked forth his acceptance of his services, without a particle of misdoubting. Presently, his features grew indistinct; their outline dim, they melted away; and, like the fresh reflection of a magic lantern, the shadow changed to the Tour Rouge; and eventful years must have intervened, for the romantic and pious boy, was become the brightest of the conclave, and metamorphosed into that warrior and statesman, whom crowned heads were emulous to enlist in the number of their friends. Again his noble form uprose in the phantasmagoria of the night, and he gazed upon Swartz, long and steadfastly, but not as before, with eyes of benignity and good will, but in the sternness of indignant wrath.

"Double-dyed villain!" cried the lord regent, whom the dreamer imagined to be uplifting over him, a naked scymetar; "ungrateful, false, and treacherous! Is this your return for all my benefits? Did you suffer me for years to delude myself, that Sigismund's personal freedom was restricted to the defile of Rothenthorn,* when, whatsoever times he was not in Hermanstadt, he was compelling the voice of fame to trumpet his renown,—as a captain, and an able one? Was not the subterfuge of madness, a conspiracy between ye? And hast thou not, in base requital of all the favours I have showered upon thee, revealed to the Richter Iwan who was his sire?—Thou hast! thy professions in the chateau of the Countess Scœpas, were false: thus then, I expiate for

* Rothenthorn; the Red Tower.

thee, thy perjury;" and Martinuzzi seemed to the dreamer, to raise his arm to strike him to the earth.

Swartz, in vain endeavoured to voice his contrition and excuse.

"Die, thankless traitor!" cried the regent! "for thou canst offer not a word in palliation."

"Indeed—I—I can,—*Alicia!*" screamed Swartz, stretching out his arm. Struggling in his agony of pleading to express himself more fully, the effort burst the charm of sleep; and the conscience-visited slumberer started from his shivering dream. Half raising himself, he looked round the cavern, and his senses were almost immediately assailed by circumstances, not less appalling, than the visions from which he had just freed himself,—but there was no second escape,—no re-awaking; and he might not shun that visitation, which presently unnerved his frame. The ground on which he reclined, palpably heaved beneath him, like the billows of the deep; low and minatory reverberations, like thunder, rumbled within the entrails of the earth.

> "Ecce repens mugire fragor, confligere turres,
> Vibratis radicibus."

Every object around seemed in motion, while a sort of blue and supernatural light quivered fitfully, and wild; animating with fantastic glare, the grunstein, or species of basaltic rock, of which the walls and roof of the dungeon were composed. It was not difficult for Swartz to divine, that the district must be visited, by one of those earthquakes, so frequent in Hungary, during the century, to which our tale refers; he started to his feet, and the apprehension of perishing in his remote prison, suddenly welled to his throat, like a molten tide of agony. In that age and country, personal courage was deemed indispensable, and men were so continually under the necessity of attesting "the mettle of their pasture," that not, as in an elder day, could valour arrogate a common appellative with virtue. It was too universal an attribute, pro-

perly to merit so honourable a distinction. The case was different with the ancients, who, whether of Greece or Rome, as Cicero admits,* were only relatively courageous. Their barbarous enemies were vanquished, and oppressed, by their own fears; we recommend the reader who may be inclined to dissent from our opinion, to turn to Herodotus' account of the irresolution of the Lacedæmonians (certainly not the least warlike of the Greeks), for days previous to the battle of Platæa.

Truth to say, these lauded heroes of the old age, could achieve great things, on the spur of the moment, but they were deficient in that invariable principle of endurance, which characterises the modern soldier, and which the Romans must have esteemed of high desert, when they distinguished it by the name of *virtus*. We have our doubts, whether the conqueror of Pharsalia would have liked to contest the palm, with either the victors or the vanquished, who fought at Waterloo. To return.—Among the very few exceptions to be met with of the bravery of the age, we might instance, the wretched inmate in the cave of the Cyganis,—weak and sickly from his youth upwards, Swartz was distinguished by a certain constitutional timidity of character.

"A puny insect trembling at a breeze."

The peril in which he now stood, shot cold thrills, through his feeble frame; his blood receded to his heart, and large and agonizing dews forced their way to his forehead. Perhaps, after all, the best recipe a man can be provided with, if he would meet death with equanimity, when thus, at unawares, his soul is caught hovering in the last moments of its separation, is the soothing consideration of his having used the opportunities of life, with temperance and moderation —

"They that have
Their virtues to wait on them, bravely mock

* Imbecillitate aliorum, non nostra virtute valeamus.—Cicero.

> The rugged storms, that so much fright them here;
> When their soul 's launched by death, into a sea
> That's ever calm."*

Even the sect of old, who deemed

> " This barren world sufficient bliss—"†

that of Epicurus, however wedded in joyless union to our present mouldering and dunghill state of being, was yet deeply impressed with the policy of such a preparation for—*the gulf of eternal dissolution.* How much more reason then have we, of this generation, to entertain a like opinion, who know, that in our flesh we shall see God:—from whose vision the film is removed; who can pierce, through the shadows and darkness, that hang over the tomb, and compass, beyond a doubt, that immortality, which the wisest Pagan only dimly apprehended in his most sanguine dream; who, " by the demonstrations of Newton, can overturn the absurd doctrine of blind chance,"‡ or fortuitous concourse of atoms, and can recognise, in the heathen's mechanical necessity,.. the first cause of his cheerless creed,—that greater Deity, who, in revealing Himself unto us, has promised, that the mortifying our appetites in the flesh will be rewarded, with an eternal inheritance of bliss, in the life to come.

Well might the Bishop of Clermont affirm, " La religion rassure l'ame et on craint bien moins la mort, quand on est tranquille sur les suites." § Swartz was not pre-armed, with this best *orvietan* against the apprehension of death: " Contra mortis timorem et contra metum religionis."* Resolving, however, not to lose existence without a struggle, he instinctively rushed to the low, and narrow entrance of the rocky cave. Loudly, but to no purpose, did he implore some one to throw open the door of his prison, and afford him a chance for life.

* Shirley. † Campbell.
‡ Dr. Brinkley's Elements of Astronomy, c. 19.
§ Masillon. ¶ Cicero, De Fin.

Alas! even to his own ears, his cries seemed drowned, in the convulsion of the elements. Soon his eyes darkened, and ears tingled, with the enervating sensation of unresisted terror; — when a dreadful crash, which sounded like the bursting of the mountain, shattered the dungeon portal to fragments, and hurled its inmate some paces forward. Slowly, Swartz revived; but ere he wholly recovered his consciousness, he felt an impulse, to explore his way to the upper air, that was irresistible. He was acting upon it accordingly, when, suddenly, a sulphureous gleam wavered, and played about him;— he recoiled several steps, for, just then, a wild, fierce cry, was heard above his head, and, as well as the film of fear, and the flickering light, permitted him to discern, he beheld, upon the ledge of a rock a short way off, a tall, gaunt figure, whose visage, preternaturally excited, glared horribly; and whose right hand held a large case-knife. The obscure appearance leaped a wide fissure, and lighted within arm's length of where Swartz leaned, in the very infatuation of terror, against the door-way :— and now it points the bare weapon at his heart — it speaks— it is no illusion. The figure was that of Unna, who prepared to stretch the speechless prisoner, a corpse upon the earth.

"False, cozening dastard!" she exclaimed, "whose treachery hath undone us,—who introduced the detested Sigismund, to the cavern of Coloswar! the dwellings of Mount Hielen will, shortly, dissolve away, and be crumbled, like a scroll, in dust, and sparks, and sulphur;— yet think not so, any more than shall Pereny— with whom thou wert leagued—that skulking Ethiop of Hermanstadt, to escape my vengeance. But for thee, since thou art chiefest villain, so shalt thou die the first. Down to thy native hell!"

Saying these words, Unna advanced one foot forward, and the blade gleamed already at the throat of her victim, whose heart sickened, and brain turned dizzy,

as he stood paralyzed, in the apprehension of instant death; and the next movement of the gipsy would have sealed his fate for ever, in this world, when, on a sudden, the earth again trembled beneath their feet, and ere the sharp and accelerated steel touched the shrinking flesh, the mass of rock, already riven, tottering, and loosened from its foundations, heaved its fragments into the air, with a convulsive force, that resounded like the pealing of many thunders. In burst, through a number of chasms, the foaming and overflowing billows of the neighbouring river. The crags and ridges of the disparted roof, were intermixed with the blood-streaked skies; and there was heard the deepening rush of waters, which became tinted with the glare of hell, from the flaming atmosphere above. The elements of earth, fire, and water, lay confusedly mingled together; "Chaos is come again!" The murderess, and her destined victim, were separated, in the concussion, by a distance of several yards;— each was thrown on the opposite edge of a vast abyss, whose darkness and depth, the eye might vainly seek to measure. The breath, and recollection of both failed them simultaneously.

For some days, the history of Swartz presents a blank; and afterwards, during his narcosis, either the torrent, or another convulsion of the earth, had borne him far from Mount Hielen. He was discovered by some Slowark peasantry, near the Marosh, lying on his face,—his eyes fixed,— his lips wide apart,— and, together with his tongue, parched and arid. But although apparently in the act of expiring, life was not yet extinct; so they conveyed him, in company with other sufferers, mostly Cyganis, from the scene of the earthquake.

It was on opening his eyelids, after a deep sleep, that Swartz first surveyed the objects around him, with apprehensive observation. His consciousness slowly returned, combined with a sense of great exhaustion; and

he ascertained, from cettain symptoms in his difficult respiration, that his reviviscence would indeed be transient. The darkened lamp of existence, seemed suddenly brightened up, as if on purpose to receive a more sacred dismissal; during which holy *viaticum*, in the course of the day, the extinguisher of death descended to quench the last vital spark, that flickered within.

"Art thou, in truth, Walter?" inquired the dying man, in faltering accents, raising his heavy eyes to the person of his attendant: "Where am I?—how came I here?—is your lord,—is Count Rodna, within call?"

From the other's reply, Swartz learned much, that surprised, and not a little, that interested him. It appeared that Sigismund had fallen in with the sad procession of carts, and other lumbering vehicles; and his eye happening to distinguish, among the number of sufferers, the person of his pseudo-keeper, he had directed Walter to return to Coloswar with the wretched martyr, and render him every possible assistance. From this person's account of the late battle, Swartz perceived how greatly the victory was attributable to the opportune arrival on the field, of the richter, who, it seemed, had caused his force to evacuate the neighbourhood, the day after the battle. Swartz was informed, moreover, that the dowager Isabella, and the young queen, had repaired to Coloswar, confessedly with the view of the latter solemnly transferring to the lord regent, before the diet, her crown, with all the rights thereunto appertaining; but that ceremony had been necessarily deferred, for, to the extreme consternation of every soul, the room, where the regalia was used to be deposited, had been despoiled of its treasure. It was discovered empty of all things whatsoever, save what was least expected to be found in such a place, namely a gory, mouldering, human skeleton, which lay stretched upon the floor.

The terrible sensation, produced throughout the country, at the disappearance of the diadem of St. Stephen,

under circumstances, so big with mystery and horror, was single and unexampled. The queen and Czerina had thereupon taken their departure, and Martinuzzi, a few hours afterwards, quitted Coloswar for the capital. The chief nobility, and the army, had followed, bearing along with them the Marquis of Piadena, and other Austrian prisoners of distinction. Of all the Hungarian magnats, who lately thronged that city, for the purpose of attending the parliament of Transylvania,* the constable Vicchy, whose attainder had been reversed, and who had been appointed one of the castellans, alone remained.

Swartz, who had preserved deep silence throughout the above communication, here hastily broke in, "How say you? — is Vicchy now in the fortress?"

"In the fortress? — in the house," replied Walter. "He was dangerously wounded by the Cygani leader, but is at present, thanks to the careful attendance of the Lady Veronica, nearly convalescent."

"Prithee, Walter," cried Swartz, rising on his couch, and with considerable eagerness of manner, "bear the message of a dying man to Vicchy. Tell him, I have an important matter to reveal, which concerns his own daughter's interests; — bid him hie hither to receive back the letter of Alicia."

Walter left the room, and, shortly after, the Duke of Eissenburg opened the door. He hesitated, and Swartz beckoned him to approach. There was mutual silence for an instant, and the dying man seemed collecting his ideas, with the purpose of addressing Vicchy, when the latter spoke.

"Agent of Iwan," he said, "let me spare you, in your present state, making a superfluous communication. I already know all you would tell me, having had an interview with the true heir, whose rightful claims I am

* P. de Rewa, c. vi.

ready to admit, and, if needs be, to maintain with my sword. I have, I fear me, lived in a dream for many years, — but that Boszorkany fooled me. Alas! my beloved daughter is never fated to wear a crown."

"Stop there!" cried Swartz; "the devil, for such she surely is, perchance spake truth therein. In one sense,* the Lady Veronica will, by your leave, yet reign in Hungary."

"I understand you; but learn, that *he*, who alone can accomplish thus much, hath offered my child to share with him his throne, and ——"

The couch of Swartz faced the west, and the rays of the evening sun streamed through the casement, on the upward countenance of the dying man. The softening light shed on it a peculiar animation, as, interrupting Vicchy, he exclaimed, though with feeble articulation, "And been rejected? — Sigismund rejected? — oh no, impossible!"

"Not rejected," replied Vicchy; "although the beams he throws upon my daughter shine coldly, as in water, it seems there is some insuperable obstacle."

"Ha! my prophetic brain! I divined as much," murmured Swartz, starting up on his couch, — "that man would scruple no extremities which — umph! Say," he cried, turning to Vicchy, while an expression of wild inquiry irradiated his ghastly visage, "has it not relation to Alaric Polgar?"

"Alaric Polgar!" repeated Vicchy, with an involuntary shudder, — "what relation can aught belonging to that man, bear to Veronica Eissenburg? No, sir, my daughter avows her predilection, for him, who rescued her from the Cygani's thraldom; but, nevertheless, affirms

* "And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to the ear,
And break it to our hope."—*Macbeth.*

See also motto to this manuscript, from Claudian.

that an insuperable obstacle has arisen to her entertaining his suit."

"Has the young lady never let drop any intimation of the nature of this barrier?" inquired Swartz.

"None, save what is wrapt in hideous, inexplicable hints," replied Vicchy.

Swartz threw himself back on his pillow, and, half burying his face in the bed-clothes, ruminated for several minutes in silence. When again he addressed himself to Vicchy; his countenance had anticipated the cadaverous hue of death. "I feel the source of life rapidly receding at my heart," he said; "Time and I must shortly shake hands for ever; but, of all sublunary concerns, the prospects of that boy lie nearest my heart,—why it should be, I know not, unless my having saved his life in babyhood, though done in the spirit of hatred and revenge to another, makes him dear to me; 'tis human to love what we have long cherished. He, my dead sister, and one other, were the sole things in all this world I ever cared for, and he now catches and entangles the feeble wings of the soul, which vainly essay their freedom. Duke of Eissenburg, the happiness of the noble Sigismund rests with the Lady Veronica—his happiness; and will that lady, who surely cannot but return his love, consign, both him and herself to unavailing and livelong sorrow, on account of some sick dream — some formless phantasy? I've heard you laud the strong masculine sense of your daughter; she, like Iwan, is of that new faith, which none can adopt, without having, even by their very apostasy, attested the vigour of their understanding. For Sigismund's sake — for your daughter's, I must speak to her, and make the appeal of a man, who, on the verge of the grave, views the phantasmas of this world, not according to the factitious lights of mortality; but, in the transparency of a holier medium. I think I can show her, that that expressionless objection, which hardly apprehends itself, ought not to interpose, between

the man she loves and happiness. Let the case be, that this fiction bear the countenance of self-reproach,—ay, guilt, proper to herself. Start not, my lord, nor knit thy brows.—What then ? — I say not, the guilt is cardinal and substantive; but, perchance, the hollow mockery, of the term, some mere chimera, as I vaguely surmise, born of the silliest prejudice. Shall such depose so sensible a young lady from the exercise of her own faculties ? Surely not. Shall mere opinion, respecting which, the decision of her own judgment, and the dictate of her conscience show the fallacy, acquire sufficient weight over her conduct, to blast her hopes and stain that honour, which, though it hath no armour of proof against sin, she truly knows, white as the heart of truth ? Why should she, by her misdoubting, infer her secret frailty, or be sensible of the sting of a reproach, who is a stranger to the guilt that is implied in it ? Wherefore, needlessly, lay herself open, to the cavils and the penalties of a misjudging world ? Can sin be imputed where neither foresight nor volition enters ? — where there is no consent of the mind ? — nay, more, where it may be presumed, that consciousness itself was absent,* 'no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another,'†—and as for involuntary soilure, there is no such thing."

"Soilure! sayst thou ? — Madness! hell!" exclaimed Vicchy. "Why couple such a sound with the idea of Veronica ?"

"Well, my lord, your daughter best knows her own immaculateness, or, at the worst, whatever of complicity with evil, abhorrent to her better nature, may sully her secret retrospects, must be laid to the account of fate, and not of crime ;‡ however, as respects the future, her

* Dormientem in sella virginem insciam deflorari posse.—Valentius Novellæ, Med. Leg. Cas. 1.

† Shelly, Preface to the Cenci.

‡ Fatumque putabit, non scelus.—Claud. Rapt. Pros.

course is free, and if, from an inexplicable circumstance, which I faintly guess at, viewed, probably, through some rare and ideal medium, she raise a nice question of casuistry, and deem that propriety exacts of her the sacrifice of Sigismund and herself, the folly, not to say the guilt, will be entirely her own,—but I hope better things. May I confer with her?"

"Thou hast strangely shook me, sir, and I dare not guess what thy words point at," replied Vicchy; "but I will fetch my daughter, and, the Virgin grant! on every account, that thy arguments prevail with her to wed this royal youth."

"Before you go," said Swartz, observing that Vicchy was about to leave the chamber, "one other word,—here I deposit back, in your hands, the confession of Alicia. Since, you have spoken with Iwan, you must be aware, that there remains one living witness, whose testimony, were it forthcoming, would evidence, beyond a doubt, the validity of his claims."

"You must mean Peter Pereny," said Vicchy.

"Right," replied Swartz; "since I last saw the noble Sigismund, I have incidentally discovered, that the disguised attendant of Father Dominick, is no other than the once haughty Waivode of Transylvania."

"Ha! Scipio, the black?"

"And Peter Pereny, are the same, my lord. Go to Iwan and say as much, and when you mention who told you, bear to him my final prayers, and bid him spare one thought from glorious empire, to the memory of the man, who first recommended him to pretend madness, as the sole means of saving him from the fate of the venerable Rodna;—'tis all I ask, and his heart, kind as it is noble, will not decline the tribute. Now, you may fetch your daughter, my lord."

Vicchy quitted the room, and soon returned, accompanied by Veronica, but whilst he was away, Swartz had undergone an alteration for the worse; life was now

ebbing rapidly; he lifted up his face as they entered, and signed with his hand, for the anxious father and his attendant, Walter, to retire. Veronica waited until they had withdrawn, and then placed herself, pale and trembling by the dying man's bed-side. Swartz, taking her hand in his, and leaning his wan transparent face towards her, spoke a few low words in the ear of the agitated girl, whose clear complexion, as she sunk upon a chair, became charged, or rather overcharged, to the very roots of her hair, with a rich red tint. "On that night —so—as I feared," said Swartz. Veronica covered her face within her robe, and her delicate form seemed to shrink within itself.

It is not our intention ever to enter upon the particulars of this private and solemn colloquy, though thereby we might assuredly illustrate a curious chapter of the human heart: for fear, however, of any misapprehension we forbear. It is sufficient, perhaps here to inform the reader, that the dying accents of Swartz, instilled themselves, gently, like the wholesome dews of Heaven, upon the heart of our protestant heroine, who, at length, consented to forego that feminine, but unimaginable scruple, which her sensitive delicacy had conjured up, like some ghost shrouded in its own formless horror. In fine, she promised to bestow "her hand with her heart in it,"* on our hero. 'Tis ten to one, under the same temptation,—my simpering dear!—but you had acted similarly.

Turn we from the death-bed of Swartz, to the gorge of the Bargartolke, on the frontier of the principality, where the curious gaze of any chance wayfarers was attracted, by the unusual appearance of a close chariot, winding its slow way along the mountain pass; now, as it descended the precipitous cliff, presenting a strong outline against the lurid sky, and presently, toiling up the deep and opposite chasm below them. These gazed, indeed, but if not their cupidity, at least all their hopes

* Rogers' Italy; and the Tempest.

of obtaining booty, must have been at once dispelled, on descrying the formidable appearance of the escort. It consisted of some score or two of horsemen, whose snowy plumes and gilded spurs bespake their honourable rank, while the ever-ready carbine, slung at their saddle-bows, gave note and warning to the banded dolbatchs, or the solitary kanactz, of the travellers' preparation against attack. Half of these, with lances in rest, and pennons displayed, preceded the chariot, as an advanced guard; the remainder brought up the rear. With difficulty, but obviously with as much speed as the nature of the ground permitted, the cavalcade we are describing passed through the cragged defile, and entered upon the scarce-trod regions beyond. The roads, before rugged and broken up, here became almost impracticable. The land was left untilled—the instruments of husbandry were destroyed, or abandoned, and even such few plots of cultivation, scattered amidst this frightful waste, as were not converted into almost impenetrable thickets, were fertilized, or rather made rank, with human manure. On all sides, such was the richness of the soil, the height of the grass was sufficient to conceal deserted cottages from sight;* war and rapine had suspended the labours of man's industry, and no erections of his ingenuity, or trace of his existence, met the eye. The mills had been thrown down, the very rivers were choked up, the sites of thriving villages, now solely indicated by charred heaps of ruins, were passed at intervals, so that for miles, on all sides, what should have been a smiling scene of health and plenty, possessed the character of some vast and deserted charnel-house.

Such were the evils, that interminable and senseless contests inflicted on this part of Transylvania, and which

* I have given this singular fact on the authority of Busbequius, p. 112. See likewise Browne's Travels, in Harris's Collection, vol. ii. p. 762.

those now traversing that desolate region seemed resolved to perpetuate; for reader, the chariot contains no less personages, than the Lady Czerina and her haughty mother, who, instead of being on the road to Hermanstadt, as was given out, were putting into execution a suddenly-concerted scheme of Isabella, to repair to the court of Sigismund Augustus, king of Poland. She meant to throw herself at that monarch's feet, and implore of him the succour of an army, to aid the patriot magnats of Hungary, in hurling from his unjust elevation, the mitred usurper of her daughter's dignities. And though she knew her brother's attention was fully occupied at home, and that his whole mind was bent on arbitrating the theological differences of his people, to the exclusion of every thing else, less immediately pressing, still Isabella doubted not, but that her eloquence would move him, and, what was a matter requiring more management, would prevail upon his phlegmatic lieges, to espouse her quarrel. There might be yet a further motive for her flying the kingdom, which, being private to the bosom of Isabella, obtained, from that very circumstance, a greater influence over her conduct. It was probable, she experienced a bitter satisfaction, in having to throw the barrier of distance, between Antoine Ferraro and her daughter. She purposed not, that the separation should be for any time, because the dread vengeance, whose horrors as yet floated dimly on her mental horizon, she well knew must exceed any pangs, incident to mere temporary and bodily disunion; besides, that a prolonged absence would be incompatible with her plans.

Still the evident disquietude of Czerina, and the tormenting reflections to which, she trusted, Ferraro would be subjected, became to the queen mother a source of malignant, though exquisite gratification.

For two days, the royal dames and their knightly escort had pursued their adventurous journey, avoiding all populous parts of the country, and choosing such solitary

and ruinous districts, as we have described above, when, at the point of time, we again solicit the reader's kind attention, the sun's disk became obscured, and magnified in cloud and vapour. A thick mist overspread the face of the earth; and now a wilder, and more desolate prospect opened before our travellers; for, on emerging from the ravine, they entered the long and mountainous tract of the Eckelebanya, whose horizon, the lowering clouds presently covered with one uniform tint. A tremendous storm visited the country; the thunder reverberated along the distant hills, and the vast sheets of blinding lightning struck man and horse with like affright. Many of the latter began to plunge and rear, to the imminent danger of their riders. After having, for above an hour, breasted the elemental strife, the party arrived before a vast chasm, or rent of the mountain, which, from the apparent contiguity of the opposite crags, would seem to have been the operation of some earthquake. Here, the fierce gusts of wind drifted like a hurricane along the rocky ledge, that formed their path, and several of the escort were suddenly unhorsed, as if struck by magic. Isabella ordered the cavalcade to halt, and straightwise, within the rifted mountain, find place of refuge, from the pitiless pelting of the tempest. In obedience to these commands, the royal chariot was drawn under a huge arch of the projecting cleft, while most of the escort, dismounting, led their frighted steeds deep within the same natural rift of granite.

There is an incident recorded of Isabella, on this occasion, which, long preserved by popular tradition, we are unwilling to pass over in silence, since history, whilst relieving her details by the affecting episode, appears to have dropped her usual calm and inflexible tone, appealing to the human heart, in such deep and melancholy accents, as are more proper to the sister muse.

The queen-mother—so runs the relation—drew back the curtain of her chariot, while the fury of the elements was

at its height, and, to the astonishment of her devoted escort, alighted. Her profuse tresses were enveloped, in the folds of her robe of cashmere, which made her customary travelling suit, and which became, at present, her only protection from the deluging storm. Putting a firm negative, on the general request to wait upon her steps, the royal lady, suddenly turning an angle of the jutting rock, struck into a defile between two lofty precipices, and was instantly out of sight.

Czerina remained in the chariot, lost in reverie; her mind, of late, appeared to sink under the peculiarities of her situation, and her health had become visibly impaired.

Alone, and on foot, Isabella traversed a black and savage wilderness, the horrors of which, the state of the weather, and the fading light, fearfully augmented. She trod the dizzy path, along the edge of the precipice, with reckless haste, but with a step as sure as that of the wild goat. The rain descended in torrents, but she marked it not. The thunder rolled with awful intensity, interrupted, so to speak, from time to time, with the howling of the wolves at a distance; but her ears were deafer than the adder's, and the heavy atmosphere of the hills, vainly discharged living fire about her person, as she wandered, like a restless spirit, through their loaded mazes. The livid glare, which made her, instinctively, close the organs of sight, failed to extort her consciousness, or withdraw her from that tempest of the soul, which added a galling spur to every step, and which her outward and corporeal sufferings, weakly typified. Clouds could not hide what passed within, nor lightnings wither. The voice of passion was louder than the thunders, though they rolled like the peal of judgment. At length, faint, drenched, and wearied, she sank down at the foot of a blasted pine, that lifted itself up against the storm. It formed the only appearance of vegetation, amid a broken and dreary sweep of naked downs, which stretched far on every side of her; not a herb had taken root, over

its bald expanse; not a blade was visible;—save this solitary tree, all was black and barren. It rose near the margin of a lake, the gleaming of whose waves was just discernible, through the mist, as they swelled high beneath the shrill and piercing wind.

Here, says the historian,* taking her poignard, she engraved on the bark of the tree, in the Latin language, these words, from Isaiah: "I went into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for the glory of the majesty of the Lord, when he ariseth, to shake terribly the earth." She paused in her occupation, and her eye fell coldly on the inky bosom of the lake, now rapidly melting into the deep gloom, and becoming blended with the massy cliff, by which it was half-environed. Suddenly, she thought it would be sweet

> "To sleep amid the music of the storm,"

and, since the land cast her forth, to make her sacred sepulchre, where living man in vengeance came not:

> "Apparelled in her costly robe of empire,
> To go to lie in pageantry below,
> And flush those waters, with her gorgeous scarlet."†

But the idea of her hoarded vengeance unappeased, crushed the rising inclination. Then, pondering on the cruelty of her destiny, in being compelled to fly the realm, over which she deemed herself entitled to rule; all outward things seemed to her, at that moment, to bear a wonderful similitude to her fortunes. Every thing about that wild, bleak, melancholy waste, was severe and sterile, but the spirit of the tempest spake not, unto her, the language of Heaven's wrath; His voice came not to her, like sounds of chiding, but from its very

* Peter de Reva. Thuanus, l. ix.; and more at large in Hilarion de Caste. "Eloges des Dames illustres."

† The Vampire, a tragedy.

depth, seemed to attest the sympathy of inanimate nature, with the personal indignities to which she had been subjected. Thus ruminating, she again drew forth her poignard, and, while all earth and sky were blent in frightful commotion, she deliberately subscribed, on the same pine-tree, that sad memorial of her forlorn condition, whose laconic significance, comprehended a world of deep and bitter emotions. "*Sic fata volunt, Isabella Regina.*"* Sic fata volunt! Alas! rejected by the heart of the man, unto whom, in her womanly devotion, she had surrendered all; no more a queen, her deadliest,— her arch-enemy, if not seated on her husband's throne, yet wanting nothing of the realities of regal power; whilst she herself, condemned to wander forth a suppliant exile, apprehensive of recapture, with all its concomitant ignominy; encompassed by difficulties on every side,—she herself, the ever-haughty daughter of the Jagellons, exposed to all the rigour of storm and tempest... "Nothing," she repeated to herself, a hundred times, "nothing was left to *her*,— save hatred and revenge." Oh, well might she, reduced to such extremity, lament over her hard destiny,—the once all-powerful "Regina Isabella!" Well might she, in imagination, fill her ears with the anthem and the dirge, and take an everlasting farewell of her departed greatness.

Having, perhaps, in some measure, rendered tolerable those agonies, which the dispiriting appearance of universal nature, had too vividly recalled, by the unburthening of her overcharged spirit, on that stricken and emblematic bole, Isabella arose, with the view of leaving that place of seclusion, when, as she lifted up her eyes, she was somewhat startled to perceive a young, etherial, and splendid form, suddenly spring, like a roebuck, from the extremity of a platform of rock, which jutted over the lake. His proximity, her disturbed state

* Orig. et Occas. Trans. à L. Toppelt de Medyges, p. 210.

of mind, and intentness of occupation, had, previously, prevented her observing. The mailed unknown no sooner lighted, just in front of her, than he threw himself gracefully on one knee, before Isabella, who gazed on the beautiful apparition, in silent astonishment. She might almost have supposed, that the genius of that lonely spot, instructed in her history, and compassionating her distress, had suddenly revealed himself to her entranced senses, putting on the shape and vesture of mortality, that he might hear and do her bidding.

"Unhoped for opportunity!" cried the youth. "Royal lady," he proceeded, "pardon a stranger, for accosting you thus abruptly. I learnt from one of your noble attendants, whom I ventured to question, that you had wandered from their guardianship. I followed you hither, and am only too happy to obtain this interview."

"Rise, fair sir," answered Isabella, "and say, what is your object?"

The unknown quitted his kneeling posture, and, after a moment's consideration, made answer: "To gratify the yearning of my heart, in some measure, but chiefly your advantage, madam."

"The yearning of your heart, sir;—my advantage," repeated Isabella, with some surprise; "you speak riddles."

"This is no time for long explanations," returned the stranger; "but the lonely situation in which I find you,—the increasing darkness,—your ignorance, alike of me, and of the motives of my obtrusion, all bid me not hesitate an instant in announcing myself; and, as far as I am justified at present, in declaring my purpose. He is the Richter Iwan, who has the honour to address you, madam, and who obtests of you to rely on his word, that you would act contrary to your true interests, were you to prosecute your journey further, and quit the land of Transylvania, for that of your birth."

"The Richter Iwan has made an alarum of his name, undoubtedly," said Isabella; "but I have yet to learn what constitutes him a judge of the interests of the queen regent of Hungary, or how her movements can any wise concern him. Still, my lord, I must own, there is, I know not what of truth, prevailing in your voice and manner, that constrains me, by an irresistible impulse, to credit your assurances ——; but pray instruct me, to whom am I indebted for this meeting; how knew the Richter Iwan, he might encounter the unhappy Isabella, on the confines of her daughter's kingdom."

"I gathered my information from one, whom I have but lately confirmed a friend," replied Iwan, "Count Maylat: but it was Count Thomas Nadastis, in your highness's present retinue, who acquainted me with your having quitted your chariot, to traverse these savage wilds on foot. To behold you thus alone, and unattended, obnoxious to the many perils of this hour,—and for the first time *since* ——," the Richter stopped abruptly, and covered his face with his hand, but almost instantly he resumed, more calmly, but with an indescribable agitation of manner, while his voice gradually lowered, till it seemed nearly choked. "Oh, madam! could you understand the nature of the feelings which now swell my bosom, almost beyond endurance, you would not only, as I fondly believe, sympathize with my agitation, but I am bold to affirm, would accede without hesitation, to my wish." He ceased, striving to repress that tumult of emotion, which every moment became more apparent.

"Richter Iwan," said Isabella, "whatever be the source of your evident discomposure, I feel, God only knows why, more interested in yourself, and moved by your conduct, than, without proof, in the case of a stranger, I should have conceived possible. I am impressed with the dignity of your bearing, and, in spite of myself, implicitly confide in your assertions; why this should be, I know not; but after our conference, I find

all endeavour vain to resist the impulse, which obliges me to comply with your entreaty, and give up my intention of quitting Transylvania. I make no doubt, you have sufficient grounds for your request, and more, are justified in suppressing them. Will you favour me, till I regain the station of my friends, with your protecting company?"

Thus spoke Isabella, well aware of the ability, power, and reputation of the Richter, and willing to attach him to her interests. But policy was not her only inducement hereunto. In saying to Iwan, that she implicitly confided in his assertions, Isabella stated the simple fact. On the clear brow of the youthful hero, high honour sat enthroned, as on a pedestal, and every syllable he uttered came gushing from the font of truth, and bore the impress of verity and intelligence. Isabella felt the ascendancy of his character, and the very mystery of his motives excited expectations of no ordinary sort. As she called to mind the wonderful tales of his achievements, there arose a commotion in her soul, the cause of which she could not comprehend, and which still remained as powerful and as inexplicable as ever, long after she, and the surprised, though delighted Czerina had reached Hermanstadt, and were again lodged in their royal residence.

## MANUSCRIPT XXVII.

"Militiæ species amor est."
OVID, *Ars. Am.* l. II. v. 233.

"Nam tua præsentem vox sonat ipsa Deum."
*Epig.* 6. MILTON.

THE relative position of Transylvania, in regard to neighbouring powers, was to all appearance little affected, by the recent aggression on her independence. On the same day that Martinuzzi ascertained, beyond a doubt, the treasonable projects of the Hungarian barons, he was destined to witness their utter failure. Though the faith of treaties, and the obligation of honour and duty, had been heretofore relied upon in vain, it was certain, the archduke was now precluded from hostile measures, by weakness and disability. His arms had received a blow at Coloswar, from which they were not likely soon to recover. The state, therefore, really enjoyed the same secure relations with that potentate, as were confidently believed to exist, previous to his unjust invasion.

Affairs indeed, seemed to take their course, as if the national independence had not been placed, in such imminent risk. But, however fair the aspect of the political hemisphere, the attention of Martinuzzi was fixed on more than one small cloud, just visible in the horizon, which, broadening more and more, from moment to moment, however unmarked of all besides, seemed to his

prophetic soul, at once the vehicle of the thunderbolt, and prognostic of the storm.

Though Solyman had withdrawn his army from the principality, he had not hitherto returned to his own capital, and his uncertain absence offered small grounds of satisfaction, while known to be hovering on the frontiers, at the head of such immense forces. The Richter Iwan, in like manner, had retired beyond the borders, but his troops were not yet disbanded; and Martinuzzi, on many accounts, still more distrusted his purposes, than even those of the sultan. His interposition at Colos-war, had unquestionably proved the salvation of Hungary, but his subsequent proceedings had been most mysterious, and were characterised by such cold formality, as to verge upon disrespect to Martinuzzi, with whom, he had only in a single instance, held personal communication. On that occasion the richter declined to uncover his face, and Martinuzzi, after a brief and embarrassing colloquy, had seen him depart with mixed feelings, in which, however, involuntary but irrepressible pain was most objective. But momentous events now evened in quick succession, all of which had, for the mind of Martinuzzi, more or less interest. The death of the Cygani bandit, from circumstances which must be shortly unfolded, touched him more deeply, than the reader might suppose. That of his nephew, Maximilian, also, though in a less degree, affected him. Where the regalia had flown, became a subject of painful meditation; and during his absence from Hermanstadt, an event had there taken place, which was truly distressing to the sensitive heart of Martinuzzi. But in addition to these absorbing sources of interest, other most important occurrences had evolved which were calculated to influence the regent's fortunes. What these were, will appear in the sequel.

It was early one morning, shortly after Martinuzzi's return to Hermanstadt, that we reintroduce that personage to the reader, seated before a table, whereon several

papers and missives, sealed and unsealed, were carelessly strewn. He was in the act of superscribing one of these, when the door of the apartment slowly revolved on its hinges, and a young gentleman, his secretary, the son of Quendi Ferens, half showed himself, but upon perceiving the regent, he started back, and would have retired.

"You can enter, Emeric," said Martinuzzi, at the same time motioning him to advance.

The secretary passed into the chamber, and closed the door.

"I see," proceeded the regent, "the morning dawns —put out the lamps."

While these artificial lights were being extinguished, and that of day admitted through the casement, Martinuzzi leant his forehead on the palm of his hand, and remained silent. Some minutes elapsed ere he again spoke.

"Take hence these presents, Emeric," he said, without raising his eyes, at the same time, extending his hand, containing certain papers, towards the secretary; "and despatch them straight to Richter Iwan, and to the Infidel—not to Constantinople—you understand?"

Emeric received the missives, saying, "To Belgrade, your highness?"

"I fear me, not so far," said Martinuzzi; "but you will learn from ——, the retinue of the Emir of Abu Obeida, still sojourn in the city?"

"They have erected spacious tents for their lodgment, on the site of the ruinous demesnes, bordering the castle moat," answered Emeric.

"I remember," said Martinuzzi.

There was a pause, during which the secretary was preparing to leave the room, when Martinuzzi spoke.

"Go not yet," he said. "In the matter of those bold conspirators, Mircé, Nadastis, and Maylat, concerning whom the council hath been moved, I'm worn with toil —something there is — Ha!" — The regent here raised his eyes, and looking earnestly into the face of his se-

cretary, demanded whether the Duke of Eissenburg were not gone from Coloswar ?

" He is in Hermanstadt, my lord," answered Emeric.

" Vicchy here ? — that is sudden ; — did he ask to see us ?"

" He came back last night," was the reply. " Your highness bade me tell him, it was your pleasure to be alone."

" I was disturbed," returned Martinuzzi ; " I should not have said that else — it was not well — so — what spoke we of just now ?"

" Your eminence pointed to this order," replied the secretary.

" I did," said the regent ; " it is the warrant for instant execution of the late castellan of Coloswar, Mircé, in whose behalf the widow of the good King John doth strive to blunt the edge of justice ; the state hath looked again into his crime, and doth not find the lack of evidence or lenity of guilt, which might justify remission of his sentence. For Counts Maylat and Nadastis, they are banished, and their estates are confiscate to the nation. See to this,—a merciless compassion would overrun the innocent land with traitors. Go now, and if the castellan seek again an audience — why ——" Martinuzzi broke off.

" Your highness ?" inquired Emeric.

" Certainly, as you say, he ——" Martinuzzi again broke off.

" Your highness ?" reiterated Emeric.

" I say, if he seek an audience," repeated Martinuzzi, with more composure ; " of course you will admit him, sir. Leave me,—but be in reach, if my voice summon you. Why do you start and change colour ? — what is 't you stare at ?"

" My lord," said Emeric, in fluttering accents, at the same time making a deep reverence, " your eminence's confessor."

Martinuzzi, reverting his head, beheld Father Domi-

nick, standing a few paces behind his seat,—he waved his hand for his secretary to leave the room, who very gladly availed himself of the permission.

"Benedicite! my good lord," said the holy father, adding, after a pause, "your grace is up betimes to-day." With this observation, the monk seated himself on a near chair, to which Martinuzzi, with a gracious inclination of his person, motioned him.

"Father, your early visit is mistimed; what, my lord, am I to augur from it?" returned the regent, without making a more direct reply.

"Vicchy's in Hermanstadt," said the father.

"I learnt as much erewhiles," said Martinuzzi, with a blanched cheek, but unchanging voice.

"Have you, then, ordered his arrest?" asked the father.

"He has received a free pardon for all past offences. Why should we order his arrest? He is now castellan of Coloswar."

"He liked not the post, since, without leave, he hath abandoned it," observed the confessor.

"Leave," repeated Martinuzzi, "what need of leave?—Are men grown slaves?—Are we the Ottoman?"

"I've news for you, my lord," said the confessor, "which may well make you ponder deeply, ere you let Vicchy remain at large." He paused for a moment, and then, with marked emphasis added, "The venal and injurious tongue of him, who spoilt your sleep, is mute for evermore."

"What is't you tell me?" asked the regent, in feeble accents.

"Luke Swartz, my lord, hath reached the term, appointed to all men living."

Martinuzzi started from his seat, and laid his hand upon the shoulder of his companion.

"Hath the earthquake?" he cried, looking wistfully beneath the cowl of the confessor.

"Even so," said the monk, filling the interval of Mar-

tinuzzi's agitation ; " the fell destroyer's scythe hath anticipated the headsman's axe. Luke Swartz lies in his grave."

" Then," exclaimed Martinuzzi, with irrepressible emotion, " my fears lie with him there! — Be the seal of the tomb on both ! — and I am free once more,—free as the universal wind — firm as the earth's centre,—master of a providence, will make my fate my own ! Henceforth, and for ever, I am what I was meant to be,—my proper destiny."

" Restrain your exultation for awhile," said the monk, " and hear further."

" The rest matters not," answered Martinuzzi ; " Luke Swartz is dead, and that thought outweighs a whole host of ordinary calamities — all circumstance hath lost its sting — fate can touch me no more,—yet, say on."

" His death-bed was attended," resumed the confessor.

" Death-bed ! —wast not the earthquake killed him, at Mount Hielen ?" broke in the regent.

" Still, my lord, he died in his bed at Coloswar," returned the monk, " and the Duke of Eissenburg was his confessor."

" I am on the rack again — Eissenburg !"

" Ay," replied the monk, " to Eissenburg's house he was borne ; and that castellan, doubtless, caught his last *accusing* accents. So I am advised ——."

" Accusing !—how mean you ?—but I'll have him apprehended forthwith. Vicchy," he added, in a lower tone, " knew too much already. What, ho ! who waits ?—Are you confirmed in what you tell me?—Who waits, I say ? Here, Emeric," he continued, to his secretary, who at this moment made his appearance, " see this warrant executed on the person of the Duke of Eissenburg,—attach him of high treason — to prison with him — be speedy, sir, and bring me word. — Was that state-traitor's death your business with me thus early, my lord ?" inquired Marti-

nuzzi of his confessor, shortly after the secretary left the room.

"In part; not wholly," replied Father Dominick.

"We thank you, my lord," said Martinuzzi, "and what made you deem, your tidings would interest us to that degree, to warrant this intrusion?"

"Intrusion! your highness!—but let that pass,—we have been acquainted for long, and may understand one another better than we dream of. We have known each other through a variety of relations. When you, my lord, first joined King John, in Poland, as well as in your subsequent journeyings,* you measured the road upon your feet, and drew your limited means from my exchequer. I remember, indeed, once pressing some such matter as a steed upon you; but you were too proud of your humility to accept the proffer."

"To what tend your recollections?" demanded Martinuzzi, with a cold and hollow smile. "These are but dreams you speak of."

"So, indeed, they seem, your eminence, to your pageant and new-coined greatness; but the waves of prosperity have their re-acting surge.† Time, in the long run, will smooth the roughest chances, and round the most apparent inequalities. We may yet meet, where we set out."

"This is not just, my lord; you have found my power of service, and may, in future."

"Never, again," said the monk. "In the battle of Coloswar my cause of apprehension perished — the death of the Cygani is the resurrection of my life. I may resume my rank in Hungary,—thy power will be no longer

* "Ter," writes Martinuzzi, in a letter to Verantius,—"Ter ex Polonia iter pedibus caussa Regis(Joannes)in Hungariam confeci, regis inopiam, ex liberalitate dominorum Hungarorum sustenans."—Apud Pray. Annal. P. v. page 271.

† Les ondes de la prospérité ont toujours ici bas, des retours.—Massillon.

of any benefit to me; whether mine is destined to avail your highness, remains to be seen; but this is foreign to my present purpose. The Lady Czerina, it seems, is denied to Marc Antoine. I come to inquire, why you violate our compact? — Her highness is kept a close prisoner in the palace: by whose orders is this incarceration?"

"By whose should they be? — by mine, of course, my lord," answered Martinuzzi. "What then?"

"Does your highness avouch it?" said the monk. "Why do you debar the Lady Czerina having intercourse with her affianced husband?"

"I do not intend that Marc Antoine Ferraro should espouse the Lady Czerina," replied Martinuzzi.

The cowl fell from the monk's head, as shaken off by some spasm.

"Do my ears deceive me?" he cried. "Dare you say as much to my face?"

"No more of this, my lord," said Martinuzzi, with some heat. "*Dare!* But hear my reasons."

"My lord cardinal, you'll drive me mad!" exclaimed Father Dominick, throwing his cowl still further from his neck. "By the Great God in Heaven! our agreement shall stand good, or you shall rue the day."

Martinuzzi was about to make some reply, apparently with considerable warmth, when the secretary re-appeared. The drapery which served to conceal the monk's person, and which, in his emotion, he had neglected, was now hastily resumed.

"My lord," said the secretary, making a low obeisance at the entrance of the chamber, "the Duke of Eissenburg, within this instant, was in the act of crossing the castle court."

"He is arrested?" interrupted Martinuzzi eagerly.

"As your highness gave orders," replied the youth.

"Let him be committed to close custody."

"He adjured your eminence, on every consideration,

to grant him an audience before imprisoning him," said the secretary.

"To close custody, sir," authoritatively repeated the regent. "That missive to the Richter—despatch it forthwith. Leave us.—And now, my friend, will you hearken to my explanation?" proceeded Martinuzzi, turning to his confessor.

"Some subterfuge!" cried the monk, disdainfully. "You deem all danger buried in the dungeon of Eissenburg—you may find yourself mistaken."

"Marc Antoine is unworthy of the hand of the Lady Czerina," said Martinuzzi.

"Who dares to say so?" cried the monk. "What new light has broke in upon you? What lay you to his charge?"

"That he is the paramour of Queen Isabella," said the regent.

"And if he be?" began the monk.

"And if he be!" interrupted Martinuzzi haughtily; "I tell you, my lord, he is. The shame was hinted at by the dying Balassi. I have since verified his words. Antoine must seek a wife elsewhere; you, my lord, will have the power to match him worthily:—at all events, he shall never wed the Queen of Hungary."

"This is your determination, lord cardinal?"

"It is my fixed determination," answered Martinuzzi.

"Have you weighed the possible consequence?" inquired the monk, with marked and significant expression.

"Consequence!" repeated Martinuzzi, proudly, "in this case the split is no more to me than the split waves, that strike against the vessel's side, but alter not her course."

"My lord cardinal, I take my leave," said the holy father, moving slowly towards the door; "I shall return, but in another guise. I perceive, thou deemest thyself impregnable; but, however hemmed in on every side, thy fastnesses of falsehood may yet be stormed. Thou know-

est not, at present, how I am armed; when next we speak, I will display my strength. If, then, like a madman, you persist in opposing this alliance, the prospect of which hath for so long been our mutual cement—if you deny our contract, your doom is sealed, proud prelate!"—Thus having spoken, Father Dominick made the regent a haughty reverence, and withdrew.

The eyes of Martinuzzi remained fixed on the door, through which he had passed. "Arrogant noble!" he said, as closing, it shut out the minatory language, and gloomy and displeased aspect of the monk; "I would not, for the world, thou wert acquainted with half what Hubert Vicchy hath cognition of; then, indeed, were my state pitiable. Yet he hinted at something—no, that's clearly impossible; only Swartz knew, and the seal is on his lip, and living, he divined not *who* lurked beneath the robe of Father Dominick, or else —. Well, he is dead, God pardon him!—and me, for my unnatural exultation. What kindred thought hath such strange fascination over me? Is not the spectre laid in the cold tomb? Then why this suggestion of evil, which yet I loath as hell, and loathing, cling to? Eissenburg is in prison, in my power—Eissenburg! that, from the ashes of my deadly terror, hath sprung new fanged. Well, I surely would not." Martinuzzi crossed the chamber with agitated tread. "Oh! mighty fiend!" he inly ejaculated, striking with his right hand that aching spot, where his heart collapsed, and with the other clasping his forehead, where his brain seemed to him to swell beyond its continent—"Oh! mighty fiend! avaunt! begone!" He paused, and then resumed, in a lower tone—"Kind Jesus! I pray thee, by thy passion, interpose. Quell this thought, this tempting thought; let it pass from me, now,—now, and for ever!" Saying these words, as if to lay the demon that possessed him, Martinuzzi crossed himself, and sunk down upon the floor before the crucifix, where, wrapt in solemn communings, we leave him for the present.

The day, which we have just ushered to the notice of our readers, in the foregoing colloquy, came on in labouring cloud and tempest. Driving rain fell unintermittingly throughout the morning, the wind swept along the streets of Hermanstadt in rapid and successive gusts; the dark precipice, fronting the citadel, which we have heretofore commemorated, was loosened at its foundation, and an immense fragment of rock toppled down with violence on the fabrics beneath, crushing them into a heap of undistinguishable ruin. The pellucid basins which ornamented the new town, where the principal streets intersected one another, and also most of the canals which divided those thoroughfares, overflowed their banks, and bore upon their inundating tide huge rafters, and other loose materials that lay about.

> "Implentur fossæ, et cava flumina crescunt,
> Cum sonitu." *

During the past night, the Rider of the storm seemed to have sat in judgment on the dark and haggard city, to deliver it over, as the day dawned, to the immitigable wrath of his ministering elements.

We take up the thread of our narrative at noon-day, when, the massy columns of cloud, rolling upward to the heavens, there ensued a short-lived pause in the fury of the tempest. About this time, the sunshine, winning through the trees at intervals, irradiated the wrapping Spanish cloaks of two men, who had planted themselves for shelter, or, more probably, for concealment, at the back of a close row of lofty oaks, that bordered a long avenue in the royal gardens. They seemed tired of their watch, and by muttered imprecation and low, peevish rejoinder, manifested their impatience. These were pre-

* Virgil. We are half tempted, but with diffidence, to think that Alison, in calling the "implentur fossæ" "an unnecessary and a degrading circumstance," is a little too hypercritical. See "Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste," E. i. chap. 2.

sently joined by a third person, similarly enveloped from head to foot, but in a garment composed of more costly materials. The large Spanish hat of this latter was looped with diamonds, and his bearing and mien seemed to betoken him a nobleman of the highest rank. The huge and intervening trunks prevented them seeing each other, till they almost touched. The latter individual stopped abruptly.

"What's your report, to-day, my friends?" he demanded, in those courteous accents so indicative of real dignity.

"The same, your excellency, as for the last se'nnight. How know you our appointed victim will pass here at all?"

"From having seen him frequently traverse this path, in the direction of the palace. He will again, I do not doubt—but, in any event, since you will not lose your hire, you can afford to be patient."

"There's reason in what you say, your excellency, I confess; but may we not now adjourn till to-morrow? We both of us are, for all the world, like two St. Niobes, oozing away into rain-water. Your Ethiop will hardly walk abroad on such a day, unless, i' faith, he guessed he would become fairer by the experiment, which is not so unlikely."

"Silence! and sconce yourselves, knaves; he's here," said he, who was the superior of the party.

At the moment, voices and footsteps became audible, and the three cautiously drew back. Presently, two persons, in close conference, made their appearance at the end of the walk.

"You say you served the Richter Iwan?" observed one of these, habited in a garb not uncharacteristic of that tropical clime of which his dingy complexion bespake him a native.

"Till lately, but now, the castellan of Coloswar," was the response.

"And your present lord has a message for me, from the Richter?"

"Therefore was I ordered to seek you out; and I was bid to add, moreover, that my lord would speak to you on a matter touching the secret, hidden in the crown of Hungary."

"Ha! Luke Swartz *has* spoken then? Did the Duke of Eissenburg say that?"

"Those were my lord's very words, sir; but where you will meet with him at present, I cannot say, for he went abroad betimes, and has not since returned."

"Where did the castellan take up his abode?"

"In the higher part of the town; the last house overlooking the esplanade."

"I shall make it my business to see your lord," said the black; "you can retrace your path to the city. My road leads onward."

The pair shortly parted, but the black had not proceeded many paces, when he was set upon by two ruffians. By his conduct, however, it became evident, he was deficient, neither in prudence, nor in courage, and as he was armed, his assailants met with a warm reception. They were, notwithstanding, gradually obtaining the advantage, when suddenly a rustling sound, like that of a roebuck, bounding through a brake, was heard in the adjacent copsewood; and the next instant, a young cavalier darted upon the scene of action. He seconded the efforts of the African, with so much spirit, that one of the villains was presently struck dead upon the spot, while the other only evited a like fate, by betaking himself to flight.

"Excellent friend, thou art not hurt," said the cavalier.

"I had been to some purpose, but for thy generous aid, Antoine," replied the black; "I was in the act of seeking you, when way-laid by yon runaway and his fellow, but he may yet bring others to attack us, so we were better not longer remain exposed to this terrible

storm. I have much to say to you; we will proceed to our usual place of rendezvous." The two men moved silently onward, and took shelter under the ruinous porchway, of which we made mention in an earlier manuscript.

The black first broke silence. "You have received despatches from Vienna, I doubt not, since we lately spoke?" he said.

"Yes; from my honoured grandsire," replied Marc Antoine; "and I have likewise to inform you, that subsequent to our last conference, I have again vainly solicited speech of my adored Czerina."

"We'll talk, sir, of that anon," said the African, with some coldness; "and what said the palatine? for in my eyes, the venerable Jerome Lascus is still palatine of Serradia."

"Oh, my friend!" cried Antoine, "he has revealed to me my parentage,—he has told me ——"

"Hath he sir?" interrupted the African, in a low, deep, and stern tone of voice; "and canst thou have learned, that thou art the lineal descendant of the time-honoured line of Pereny?—a house, the noblest in all the land, that hath, ere this, given kings to Hungary and Bohemia. Canst thou have learned, thy father liveth, eager to embrace his sole surviving son, and have room in thy breast for any other emotions, than those of exulting pride and filial aspirations? Canst thou couple with this intelligence of thy grandsire, an expression of aught resembling discontent, because, forsooth, the portals of this palace are closed to thee?"

Here Ferraro (for we will still occasionally term Count Marc Antoine of Pereny by the name, to which the reader is habituated) broke in,—"Oh, spare your reproaches!"

"Sir," interrupted the African, in the same severe tone of displeasure as at first, "were the graf Pereny of my mind, he would disown a son, whose heart did not bound with extacy, at being informed of his descent. Do you

see yon donjon keep? Thy ancestors, Marc Antoine, have, from within those walls, made known their will to Transylvania. The royal standard of Pereny hath floated from that pinnacle, where now, — look yonder! do you behold the ensign of that usurping priest?"

Ferraro started, and changing colour, replied, that he did.

"Thou hast but lately learnt thy high descent, Antoine; thou hast yet to understand the duties, thy new rank involves, the claim thy country hath upon thee." The black paused for an answer; but Ferraro, partly through surprise, and partly overawed by the energy of his manner, remained silent. "Dost faint already? Then thou art chicken-livered, and stand'st in need of counsel, lest, when thy father lays bare his soul to thee, thou strike him, all aghast.—I've that to spur thee on, shall make thee top his hopes. Marc Antoine, the lady of thy homage,—she, whom I, weakly trusting to the honour of Martinuzzi, had promised thee to wife, is now to be transferred, it seems, to some more honourable claimant than is the son of Peter, Count Pereny."

"Ah! exclaimed Antoine," impetuously; "I should like to set eyes on the man, who dares contest my right to the hand of Czerina; she has told me that she loved me; and not, while one drop of blood flows in these veins, will I resign my pretensions."

"I know thee now again," said the African; "this heat strikes out bravely. Thy father will not have to blush at thy degeneracy. So thou art denied access within these walls,—within these walls, that thy great ancestors,—but no matter,—denied access by whom? By the tyrant *kiral* of that Erdély, where formerly I ——, I would say where your father, Antoine, ruled as waivode, denied by Martinuzz;—and *unto whom denied?* To.... Antoine, bend down your ear, and list to me; the north wind rages, indeed, and shakes palpably this regal dome; the flood-gates from above are loosened, and heaven and

earth seem toppling from their base, but heed it not." The African pausing, stooped his head, and in a whispering but distinct tone proceeded:—" List thou to me I say, while I, in voice more low than the soft breeze, creeping at midnight, through the sleeping boughs, to wake them into motion, discourse to thee of most mysterious matters, touching the state of Hungary." At that moment, a single vivid and lengthened flash of lightning quivered within that delapidated porchway, which they had chosen for the scene of their conference. The countenance of the twain became tinged by the ghastly radiance, and the eyes of the African seemed to glare out of their sockets, as, laying his hand heavily on the arm of his companion, he said; " What ailest thee? thou dost not observe me, Antoine."

" Indeed, but I mark thy words," replied the envoy.

" 'Tis well thou dost," returned the black; " and yet," he continued, muttering to himself in so low a tone that Ferraro could not catch the sentence, " all may be adjusted; and why should I, to no purpose, divulge." Interrupting himself, " Marc Antoine," proceeded the black, more audibly, " 'tis not my part, but that of thy sire, to lay bare to thee that monstrous piece of work, I hinted at erewhiles. Doth not thy heart prompt thee, to make one inquiry after the author of thy being?"

" I was referred to thee, and would, ere this," replied Ferraro, " but that ——"

" But that thy heart," interrupted Scipio, with an air of displeasure, " was over-brimmed already with a light passion."

Here the African was broken in upon in his turn: " A light passion, sir!" echoed Ferraro; " thou dost presume ——"

" Presume!" repeated the African. " Young gentleman, I smile at, and forgive your folly; but thy father, who hath the best right and title to direct thee, shall counsel thee in this. Yet mark me, Antoine! — If, in-

deed, Martinuzzi oppose thy union with the Lady Czerina, there will a thing transpire, something almost beyond belief, which, as though an avenging voice from Heaven forbade the banns, will preclude the possibility of this alliance!"

"Wherefore should the regent's veto be so absolute?" inquired Ferraro; "the lady is no less his queen than mine. Such tyranny, as that thou speakest of, may defeat its own purpose. I will resist the cardinal's decree; and, let the worst betide, I can but die."

The African looked down in a deep reverie. "Count Pereny," he said, after a pause, "will explain all this; thou, as yet, seest dimly, walking, as it were, in a dream. But meet me to-morrow, at midnight, here, as usual, and, perchance, thou shalt embrace thy father; if not, I shall have to lay bare such treasonable practices of yonder high-throned prelate, against the house of John of Zapola, as, I trust, will rouse thy loyal indignation. I know what's rushing to thy lips; control thyself, and — hark! those shouts were scarce the murmuring of the wind, — something pursues the thunder in his track; — ha! that sound was human."

The African's ears served him faithfully. There gradually mingled, with the moaning winds and plashing of the tempest, a low, rushing sound, which, as it became more audible, was discovered to be the clamour of loud and angry voices. The two sprang to the doorway, — the black breathless, and with lips apart. As the tumult approached nearer, they caught sight of a party of men, indiscriminately armed, with sticks, staves, swords, and halberts. These were speeding tumultuously towards the ruinous porch, that sheltered Ferraro and his sable companion, who, as the hubbub came nearer and nearer, could distinguish the exclamations, that lived awhile, amid the din of elements.

"The murderous rascals! — this way they fled, the villains!"

"Ha!" cried one, pointing to the dilapidated doorway, "there they stand!—behold!—hola! let us on—on!"

Ferraro and the African drew back. "Antoine," observed the latter, "the villain, whom you slew in my defence, is, doubtless, supposed to have met his death unfairly; and I fear, that yon tumultuous rout are now upon our track."

"What is to be done?" asked Ferraro.

"I would not care," replied the black, "to await the coming of these people, and explain away their cause of misapprehension; at the worst, my will were sufficient to avouch the act, they charge us with; and, at any other time, it would be but right of us to boldly confront such an accusation. But now, high discoveries are on the eve of being effected, which must not run the chance of any failure. Let us leave this place."

Saying this, the African passed a few paces further within the deeply-shadowed porchway, and, stooping, applied his finger to a small iron spring upon the ground. This was so minute in form, and so carefully concealed amid a heap of grout and other ruinous materials, that no eye, unless apprised of its existence, could have detected it. Immediately, an oblong flag-stone, apparently deep sunk in the earth, slid a little on one side, and discovered a small trap-door. Ferraro was struck with astonishment. The shouts and cries grew louder; the pursuers were evidently within a few paces of the doorway.

"Follow me," said the black, as he dived into the subterranean retreat, to which this secret aperture gave access.

Ferraro, without a moment's hesitation, plunged after him, down a descent of some six or seven feet; and his companion, having first, by the pressure of a counter-spring, restored the stone to its usual deceptive position, involved him, for a short distance, in a narrow, vaulted,

and circuitous passage, which, leading gradually upwards, at last seemed to reach its termination in a heavy door, through which they were admitted into an oaken chamber of moderate dimensions, in every way, save in respect of its being uncommonly lofty. It had a dusky and uninhabited air. At the upper end was a single, small circular window, deeply indented in the wall, several feet from the floor, through which alone the gloomy autumnal day-light obtained admission. Beneath this window was a dark and small recess. This room would have been wholly divested of household furniture, but for a single wooden chair, over which hung a large, massive, and, by the worn and threadbare condition of the canvass, evidently very ancient portrait, of some Transylvanian king or warrior. A door, elaborately carved, and at present closed, corresponded with the one on the opposite side of the apartment, through which Ferraro and the black entered.

"We are now within the queen's palace," whispered Antoine's sable conductor—"I must even leave you for a minute, to ascertain our further progress in safety. Be still as death during my absence, for the suite of apartments you now are in, have a strange echo. Remain in this recess, the gloom of which, if by chance *he*—any one—should enter the room, will serve to conceal your person, until my return, or if I cannot do so, conveniently, until the individual whom I shall appoint to guide you without the palace walls, make his appearance."

Without waiting for Ferraro's reply, the African turned slowly away, and availing himself of the chair beneath, raised himself to a level with the portrait, and then, by some mechanical process, caused it to revolve open, in the manner of a door, through which, as if by enchantment, he immediately made his exit.

Ferraro, as the portrait resumed its station on the wainscot, suddenly found himself standing alone in the interior of the royal palace, whither he had been con-

ducted so unexpectedly, and by so secret a mode of access. Thus left to his own solitary thoughts, he had nothing better to do, than to ponder on the peculiar cruelty of his fate, in placing him under the same roof, and possibly within a few yards of the mistress of his affections, without his being able to make his proximity known to that lady. Ferraro was still deeply absorbed in musings, which, by some mental association, were continually recurring to the singularity of his present situation, when all at once, low voices broke on his ear, and presently he heard a key turn in the lock of the door, opposite to the one, by which, the African had introduced him to the apartment. He had hardly time to enshroud his person in the gloom of the recess, beneath the solitary window, as in case of his finding his privacy invaded, had been recommended, ere the door half enclosed, and two individuals passing forward, were seen to occupy the opening space of the door-way. The heart of Ferraro leaped to his throat, as his orb of sight lighting on the spot, discerned, at the first glance, in the drooping slight form of one of these, the object of its impassioned worship. But now, her usually bright eye was dimmed, and owned a wandering expression. Her lip and her thin cheek were alike pale; her gait was languid, and it seemed as if her youth and beauty were decaying under some cankering blight, and her whole being, fading away, slow and almost imperceptibly, as the soft light of eve, by dull, but uninterrupted degrees, evanishes into darkness. However pained, Ferraro's amazement, or to speak more correctly, his horror, almost betrayed his presence, as he transferred his gaze to the man, who was apparently holding familiar colloquy with the Queen of Hungary, He was one, whom Antoine little anticipated beholding at that moment, and least of all, in the company of Czerina. The cowl over-shadowed the face, and the dark cloth closely enveloped the form, of the mysterious and dreaded Father

Dominick. Ferraro drank in their doubtful discourse with all his ears.

The arms of Czerina were stretched out, half in caress, and half imploringly, towards the holy father. "Forgive me, ere you set me free again," said the royal maid, beseechingly; "forgive me, that I cannot so readily wed to please you, as I could wish—but I cannot, no indeed."

"Lady," said the monk, in a voice, the solemn cadence of which, struck on Ferraro's heart, like some deeply melancholy strain, with which, though he could not recall the air, he was most familiar,—"Lady, this union would not only be most auspicious for your subjects, though I must not tell you wherefore, but likewise is indispensable to the repose of your future life. Credit me, if I have seemed harsh, 'tis thy welfare that prompted, and will continue to prompt my words, no less than my determination herein. This alliance must take place, otherwise all to come of thy frail existence will be wretched—oh! wretched beyond imagination."

"Alas!" cried Czerina, in piteous accents, "were my wretchedness without previous parallel, it cannot exceed that, which will be my lot, if I must weary of a lingering life, and be disposed of thus." In saying these words, irrepressible tears gushed from the azure eyes of Czerina, which she turned aside her head in order to hide.

The countenance of the monk could not be seen, under the shadow of his cowl—he moved a few paces with faltering steps, and there ensued a mutual and thrilling pause. Father Dominick first strove to break silence, but his deep organic tones seemed smothered, with some internal emotion. "Czerina," he began, "Lady,—lady Czerina, my dear child, you must acquire more firmness, or —— how pale, how very pale thou turnest. Oh, dry thy tears! each drop thou sheddest weighs on my spirit, like a several poison, bitterer far than aconite, and perchance no less deadly.—Yes, lady," he proceeded with extreme

earnestness, "to be doomed to see thee decline into a shadow of thy former self, waste all away, is a meet curse for me; I wont deny it; but, girl, shouldst thou indeed dissolve into an early tomb, think not thou wilt die sinless, lay not that soothing consolation to thy heart, for know (and let the thought induce thee to bear this world's infliction, like a Christian, )in thus indulging thyself unto death, thou art committing an incalculable sin."

"Now God forbid!" ejaculated Czerina; "and do you take pity on me too; lest,— as in the hush of night, I often dream of late,— my glass of life run down his few remaining sands, before that hated bridal, with which you threat me."

"And thus," said the monk, with some asperity, "wilt thou, (and not unwittingly, after my warning), perpetrate a crime, revolting! monstrous!—so monstrous, Czerina, as to have been held impossible, by sagest lawgivers. Take thought!— have a care what thou art about, and weary the saints with prayers to bend thy stubborn will, to my desires;— this hated bridal, as in thy self-will, and overweening pride, thou termest it, in this world, is not to be eluded,—there is no retreat, save in the unfathomable ocean of futurity, whither plunge thou canst not, unless, as I have just hinted, with inexpiable sin to drag thee down;—thou canst not die, my child! By Heavens! thou must not!"

These last words were enunciated, by the holy father, in a suffocating tone, of indescribable commiseration, and suiting his gesture to his language, he long hung over the fragile form of the youthful queen, in mute and affecting solicitude.

At length, Czerina again spake, raising, momentarily, her watery eyes, to the steadfast gaze of the monk, but dropping them, ere she finished the sentence.

"The queen, my mother, sir, by my father's testament, she was to have a voice in my disposal,— I will consult her grace."

The monk seemed hardly conscious of what our heroine had spoken; his eyes continued fixed, in earnest scrutiny of the snowy complexion, and exquisite lineaments of her downcast countenance.

"Thy mother! saidst thou?" he abstractedly rejoined, after a minute's thought.

"Thou heardest me," returned Czerina, in that haughty tone, natural to her, but which, in the present instance, appeared to escape her lips, involuntarily.

"Mother! My child!" murmured the monk, in a tone of deep melancholy, but still, seemingly, lost in abstraction.

There was a pause.

"How doth thy voice ever fill me with strange awe!" observed Czerina.

The monk laid his hand on the maiden's head, and, while stroking down her hyacinthine curls, said, in a deep, low tone, as if his secret thought found unconscious voice: "How all thy mother's wound into thy form! Just like her tresses, beams thine auburn hair!"

"Nay now, you jest," returned Czerina, in some surprise. "My mother's hair, sir, is not auburn.

"*Was*, *was*, child, *was!*" exclaimed the monk, in deep and melancholy accents; "but I wander—for a moment." Then resuming his composure, he continued: "Thou namedst the queen, awhile ago,— thou erredst. What voice hath Isabella? Few women know what, in the world, is its true policy— the widow of King John, the least of all — so in the state and senate-house, they leave no room for thee, or for thy mother. Time there was, indeed, but not for long, when matrons met in parliament, and from their carved and ivory stalls,* young gallants would receive a hint, how proper rich robes, all blushing like confusion, beseemed their persons. That was not so much amiss; but affairs of government, and

* These seats were styled, by Boetius, "Indecori curules."

such weighty matters, are meant for men to manage." The monk paused, as if for a reply, which Czerina not immediately rendering, he said; "I must now leave you to reflect on what has passed between us; I will return though. Light us again, fair lady,— relume those orbs."

Czerina answered by a low sob, the utterance of which, she evidently did her utmost to repress.

"Why wilt thou grieve me, child?" said the monk, abruptly, breaking away from the young queen, and crossing the chamber, in the middle of which, however, he stopped, and turning towards her, subjoined with uncommon solemnity of manner:—"Queen of Hungary, thou must learn better to command thy feelings, than to weep away thy strength and colour thus. Thou feedest too much the passion of thy soul. It should be made subserve the interests of the realm, committed, by the King of kings, to thy authority."

Czerina made no reply; and the monk immediately passed on, mounted the chair, and then added: "Retire now to thy chamber, and expect me to return;—I will return."

Saying these words, Father Dominick found egress, after the same secret mode, by which the African had, previously, effected his retreat.

Ferraro stood transfixed on the same spot, where he had remained an astonished witness of the foregoing scene; his soul panted for some explanation of so mysterious a colloquy,—and his joy at the opportunity of conversing with the Lady Czerina, was qualified only by his alarm, at her half-open and blanched lips, and evident nervous condition at the moment. While he was yet hesitating, how to accost her without occasioning her too sudden a surprise, Czerina clasped her hands upon her eyes, whose long dark fringes overflowed with the heart's rain. Presently she breathed a few words, in

that low and dulcet voice, which was so peculiarly her own, that Ferraro would often feel, when gazing, for any time on her etherial countenance, and fragile frame, so purified from all taint of earthly grossness, that some embodied piece of harmony floated before his eyes, and he would start the self-betraying colour to her cheek, by whispering in her ear, with that seductive grace he knew so well to wear, that the artist who would catch her likeness,* must know, to dip his colours in the spheres, and trick her off, "entangling the wild winds,"† since verily he inclined to fear, that were she approached too rudely, she would melt all away into a tune. It was in those melodious accents—

> "Untwisting all the chains that tie,
> The hidden soul of harmony,"‡

that Czerina now suspired to herself,—"He said he would return. Oh no! not again. I cannot stand before him. Hush! no, it was my heart. When I am dead,—yes, I feel I shall perish before that hated union. My bridal sheets will be a fold of lead, in some untrodden spot; when I lie there, which will be soon, I think, and hope.—How I shall abhor the name of ——. My self-will indeed! what,—marry his choice, and I love another!—I can bear to die, and yet it were too much to die of that man's majesty. Oh man! most strangely terrible thou art to me, yet as I live, I cannot hate thee; what spell is in the form I shrink before, yet for the world I would not he were not?" Here a deep and involuntary sigh of Ferraro quivered on the ear of the fair soliloquist. She started.—"Mercy! what's that?" she cried; "if thou

* Et si vis similem pingere, pinge sonum. Ausonius, 11, 8.

† Sweep the loud lyre, and while thy garments blue,
Like air, and lighter than the dawn, and few,
Entangle the wild winds.—*Music*,

‡ Milton.

be any other, speak,—who's there?" Ferraro, dubious how to act, made no reply; and Czerina, supposing herself mistaken, went on. "Methought a breath of sympathy stole on my ear: how could I think so? I am too high to court regard.—Alas! what friend have I in all the world?" The hands of the royal maiden fell listless by her side; not the least shade of the rose remained on her pale cheek, and as she stood, all mute and motionless, she looked some sculptured personification of deep grief.

"How beautiful!" communed Ferraro with himself; "I deemed that nothing half so fair, could ever last so long. Hath she no heavenly feeling of herself? I'll not believe else."

A soft sigh escaped Czerina, as she repeated,—"No friend have I in all the world,—my mother? No!"

"What music," proceeded Ferraro, in his extacy; "flows not from her parted lips? What perfume surfeits the luxuriant air, if not her breathing?"

"No friend," sighed Czerina, "in all the world;—Martinuzzi? No."

"Oh ye saints! how like to ye she stands! If that arm be white, marmoreal rocks, hewn in the Parian earth, are spotted. Why did she weep? Lo! still delicious drops hang trembling on those lids, rejecting the bright flashes of her eyes, whose heat will drink them soon."

"No friend in all the world!—Ferraro? Yes, Ferraro."

"Did she not muse my name?" said the rapt listener; "it does not sound familiar to me;" he ceased, and then, after drinking in at his eyes, another intoxicating draught of passion, he felt unable any longer to control himself. Emitting his whole soul in the tender syllables, he softly whispered,—"My queen!"

"Holy Mary! Who spoke?" inquired the maiden.

"My queen!" repeated Ferraro.

"Is it a voice, that mocks my failing senses? Marc Antoine, or his spirit?"

"Czerina," exclaimed the incautious lover; "be not alarmed,—'tis I."

Thus speaking, he emerged from his concealment, just in time to receive our startled heroine, in his encircling arms, her almost fainting form clinging instinctively to his pressure. Oh! for the pen of the author of Devereux, to describe the thrilling moments that ensued, when every nerve of Ferraro's frame, tingled in the embrace of the delicate girl, as she, half unconsciously, weaved her arms around him. If, as we have seen, her visible presence, long denied to him, excited his romantic temperament to a degree of enthusiasm, bordering on phrenzy, how must passion have concurred to inflame his senses, when he found himself in bodily contact, with the lovely creature, who constituted his heaven upon earth! "That is the exact time," says one, who, whenever he ventures upon the theme, writes evidently *con amore*, "when love has reached its highest point; and when, to renounce the object beloved, is the most deadly sacrifice;"* but, however exquisite the topic, it touches (like the style of Burke) the verge of all that is objectionable, for which reason we dismiss it. Either Ferraro's chafing her temples, or his pressing her to his bosom, was so far successful, that soon the royal maiden's senses were in some measure restored. After some minutes of delicious silence, which she was the first to break, a faint glow of the most lovely red retinged her cheek, and blushed through all her frame.

"Antoine," she murmured, in a low tone, "how you alarmed me!" Then, as she gently struggled, with a feeling of ingenuous shame, to disengage herself, from the ardent embrace of her lover, she proceeded: "Why did you run this risk? — by what magic do I find you here?"

Ferraro briefly explained the circumstances, that led to

* Paul Clifford.

his being left alone in the apartment. When he had done, Czerina bit her lip, as if in vexation, and, for a minute, her spirit seemed locked up in some unpleasasant contemplation.

"I distrust that Scipio," she at length said; "it may be all for the best, but I hope, you have good grounds to go upon, in confiding to his honour."

"The best in the world," returned Ferraro; "my grandsire's recommendation — his own manifest integrity, and, more than all,—Oh, Czerina! he will, to-morrow, introduce me to my father."

"I knew not that your father lived," said Czerina, in a tone betokening her interest.

"But he does, love," replied Ferraro, "and it is my pride, that he can boast a heart as high with noble flame, as any of your grace's lieges, being every way their equal, or their lord; nay, my sainted-queen, the heaven-blue veins that lace and warm and swell thy lively bosom, wave with a stream, more lovely and more bright, than flows within the channels of this arm; but, save its royalty, no nobler."

The sweet face of Czerina pourtrayed her pleased astonishment.

"I am not glad, either," she said, after a pause; "alas, Antoine, the nearer heaven, the nearer thunder!* "

"The nearer bliss and love rather; but let's talk of something else. Do you tell me now, for I burn to learn, what could induce you to hold such long discourse, with that dire character. You were not at shrift, and if he be the confessor of your guardian, he is not yours."

The conscious maiden instantaneously changed colour, and every limb quivered as if with a separate agony.

"Ask me not!" she wildly exclaimed. "Ask me not, Antoine! Oh, would to God!" she continued,

* Πορρω Διος και τε πορρω κεραννου.

"some gentle death would seal my lips, even in the act of speaking!"

Ferraro was too sensibly shocked at the dreadful state of agitation, into which his simple observation had thrown our heroine, to further press his inquiry at that moment, and, however pained by her reserve, and deeply interested to ascertain the nature of the connection between the object, he so deeply loved, and so dangerous a character as he esteemed Father Dominick to be, he still endeavoured to relieve her from her evident distress, by giving a new direction to their discourse, as, in a tone of badinage, he said — "I would, dearest, I were that death."

"You?" said Czerina, "fie, Antoine."

"And yet I would not," returned Ferraro; "who could wish so fair a creature's death? — or who consent to lose thee? Lady, I should keep thee dying many, many years."

"Have you the heart, Antoine?"

"I'd do it in pity, sweet."

"How much stronger were pity then, than love?" said Czerina, with a melancholy smile, at the same time brushing from her eyelid the glistening tear. "But talk no more thus: if I had not almost forgot my grief to listen."

"Princess!" cried Ferraro, "you know not how you pain me — why in thine eyes inhabit such sad woes? — what hast thou to sorrow done?"

"Oh, Antoine!" exclaimed Czerina, breaking forth into accents of irrepressible anguish—"rather ask, what have I done to him, whose gentleness is pain and doubt to me, whose anxious care I feel, but cannot thank, for some strange sentiment of reverential awe,—who, when he stabs with dreadful words, which must be just, I think, yet know not wherefore, health is a disease, and life abominable? What have I done to him, whom yet I love, even

as if that feeling sprang from every cause of hate and terror?"

At these words the heart of Ferraro recoiled, as though a burning coal had fallen on it. "Love," he repeated, in a tone of agony, "and is that it? — thou dost trample upon my heart, lady, which, at a word, I will lay bare before thee."

"Good God! Antoine!" cried Czerina.

Ferraro strode across the room. "There is no truth!" he exclaimed, with bitterness, "in any thing we hear, or feel, or look upon, for sight and sense are falser in themselves, than the flat perjury we overlook, in all that seems beneath the sun."

"Ferraro! — dear Ferraro!" ejaculated the queen.

The maddened lover traversed the apartment, without heeding the endearing epithet. "Fortune, painted blind, infers her fickleness, having no eyes to see on whom she lavishes; but, thou! hadst thou been thus, my heart had not been riven." Ferraro broke off.

"What have I done to thee, I ask?" demanded Czerina, seizing him by the hand.

"Nothing," he replied, with a cold and bitter smile, "nothing, that doth deserve reproach;" he paused, but, presently, again starting into a phrenzy, exclaimed, "Oh, cursed hopes! that whisper into our hearts gay things, yet mock the touch, as summer-boughs, which coquet with the wind or any suitor, and whose light leaves, that shadowed us in fancy, fail in the autumn of reality; whilst we, stripped of confiding thoughts, assailed by the keen blasts of wonder at our blindness, remain our own contempt, naked, exposed in worse than wintry bareness. Whom?" he added, grasping the queen's hand fiercely, "whom do you love? — only tell me, and I will show, how I have worshipped, and still doat."

The tears coursed each other down the cheek of Cze-

rina, as, in piteous accents, she repursued the train of thought, the sudden appearance of her lover had interrupted.

"You too! — alas! I have no friend in all the world, Ferraro?—No."

"I never," proceeded Ferraro, without regarding, in his jealous wrath, the anguish of the maiden,—"I never told you that — never, how absolutely I was, and am your slave; but if you thought, when that I could not mould my passion's form, I loved my dear fame better, or my life, you wronged me, lady."

"Heavens! Ferraro!" cried the queen, in a more reserved and indignant tone,—"provoke us not too much, what can I have done, in contradiction of the waste of thought I late bestowed on thee, but which now you make me repent?"

"You said, even now, you loved," observed Ferraro coldly.

"I said I loved!" cried, or rather shrieked Czerina "thou dost presume sir,—presume above our mercy,—loved! — whom did I say, I loved?"

"Lady," replied Ferraro; "thou didst not breathe his name, which, when we truly love, is ever treasured too deep in the fond heart, to be met wild upon the thoughtless lip."

"But what did I say?" again shrieked Czerina.

"All madam," replied her jealous lover, "that the passionately-loving feel."

"Ha! can it be, I love him?" she shrieked, "love — what love? Oh, no, no, Marc Antoine! — if I said love,—Oh, that is monstrous! — you have made me hate the word — I could not be so false unto myself."

"So false to me, you mean," said Ferraro.

"Perhaps so, Antoine," replied the maiden.

"Do you confess as much?"

"And more," rejoined Czerina; "when I said love, I meant not that voluptuous melancholy, I feel at thoughts

of thee, but something more awful, more serene, more like what is due to Heaven. My yearning in his regard sways my heart, as some religious instinct."

"In his regard! — in whose?" demanded Ferraro.

"My guardian's, sure," answered the queen.

"Martinuzzi! — Oh, then indeed, — and yet," proceeded Ferraro, correcting himself, "thou shouldst not love him; for he, Czerina, would act the tyrant towards his lawful sovereign, and sacrifice thy happiness, to prop the tottering fabric of his own ambition."

"Alas!" cried Czerina, "I know it but too well."

"Then why dost yield to his authority, love?" said Ferraro, in his most seductive accents.

"Why do I breathe? — why did I first love you? I know no more, than that it is so, Antoine."

"And dost thou love me, Czerina?"

"Canst thou ask it?" demanded, in turn, the confiding maiden. "Would I, despite my clear thoughts for defences, have exposed myself to hard construction, by so often holding private parley with thee, if, with all my heart, I did not love thee?"

The gaze, with which Ferraro met this avowal, was so fixed and ardent, that Czerina lowered her own look to the floor.

"Sure, if my mother," she rejoined, after a pause, "Antoine,—if opportunity but sort, speak to my mother of our attachment."

"Thy mother!" echoed Ferraro, involuntarily starting, as if something horrid had occurred to his imagination.

"You seem troubled, Antoine.— Ay, my mother; she never liked me; but sure now, she'll stretch forth her hand to save her daughter. Tell her, I'll die a thousand deaths, sooner than wed the Richter Iwan."

"The Richter Iwan," repeated Ferraro.

"Yes, Antoine, that man is to be the instrument of

my torture; but, oh! appeal to my mother: tell her,—do I not hear a step?—God! if he should return, and find you in this chamber, after having so solemnly proclaimed his will to me!"

"Is it Father Dominick you speak of?" demanded Ferraro eagerly.

Again the cheek of Czerina blanched to the hue of death, as she replied, with an embarrassed air, and in a broken and faltering tone of voice—"Yes—not—that is he! Father Dominick, said he would ——;" she stopped short—she could utter no more.

"Oh, Czerina!" exclaimed Ferraro, with emphatic earnestness—"What horrid ties are those, which enthrall thee in the mesh of so mysterious an individual, as is this monk, with whom thou consortest?"

"Mysterious indeed!" sighed Czerina, who, at the observation of her lover, recurred in thought to the sad night-mare of her childhood,—to that fatal remembrance, which threw its bleak shade over her subsequent existence, intercepting all sunshine from her heart—withering every hope—darkening every prospect.

"Then, why submit to so sinister an influence, my queen?" continued the envoy, with considerable fervour. "Why should the diadem of your father, stoop either to the mitre or the cowl? I am your faithful subject,—loveliest of human beings; I am likewise your chosen knight, and in both, or either of those capacities, I implore of you, to let me question this man of mystery on his return, and insist on an explanation of his past proceedings, and his motives in insinuating himself into thy confidence."

"Thou shalt do no such thing," cried Czerina, in a voice of intense, but half stifled terror. "Antoine, thou knowest not what thou dost propose; thou dost dare, beyond playing with thunderbolts. Thou mightest as well essay to direct the lightning in its track, as hope to dictate to *him*. Thou mightest as easily prevail on in-

exorable death to turn aside his shaft, as melt *his* icy heart. Thou hadst better far exert thy voice to fright a raging lion, than dare to set thyself in opposition to *his* will."

"What you say, Czerina," returned Ferraro, "is as an adamantine band round my desire, to strip the mask from this chartered mystery. This being, twin-born of night and horror—whose very name, whispered in the streets of Hermanstadt, turns pale the bravest—at whose presence men's hearts collapse—whom, thousands of my countrymen would as lief embrace the eternal fiend, as take by the hand in amity, with whom, notwithstanding, they may be ignorantly holding frequent intercourse, since what visage lurks under the drapery of this cowled horror, none living knoweth. Men say, indeed, that that sentry, whom many years ago, a *villie* enticed from his post, beneath the precipice, beheld the father face to face, in the vaults of Hermanstadt."

Not snow, new fallen from the chill skies, was whiter or colder than the cheek of Czerina.

Ferraro, absorbed in one deep contemplation, noticed not the sudden fading of her cheek. "That unfortunate was slain; and now his murderer weighs upon the breast of Erdély, like some unutterable incubus. This should not be, my princess. Whilst a stranger in the land, I had neither warrant nor wish to interpose: now, however, I have both;—my station, and, from what I have this hour witnessed, my anxiety for thy happiness. Oh, Czerina! I adjure you, by all that is holy, for my sake, for your own sake, to let me await the ghostly father's coming, and unmask his devices."

"Would you have me die suddenly in thy sight, Antoine?" cried the young queen, with a quivering voice, as she trembled in an agony of apprehension.

"My princess!" returned Ferraro, soothingly.

"I ask, would you wish to stretch me, as by another word thou wilt, a corpse at thy feet, Antoine Fer-

raro?" again demanded the excited maid, in a more piercing tone.

"Heavens! Czerina, calm thyself,—how can you put it thus?"

"Antoine! sir! I would rather lay bare my bosom to your dagger's point, than that you should persist in your rash design. If you would not murder me upon the spot, tell me, thou dost forego it—be speedy;" she continued, with a heightening colour, and an attitude of intense attention, "for, even now, my heart beats high to his firm tread along the corridor."

"Whose tread? the monk's?" demanded Ferraro, as listening, his ears caught the sound of approaching steps.

Czerina uttered a feeble shriek, and turned her eyes on her lover with the most intense supplication. "Answer me," she cried, without making any reply to his previous inquiry. "Dost thou abandon thy suicidal intent?"

"Do you yourself know who, or what this man is, who hoodwinks us with his cowl?" said Ferraro, evasively.

"I do, I do, I do," replied Czerina, with eager reiteration, for now some person was evidently close at hand.

"And you have beheld him face to face?" persisted Ferraro.

"Often, and often."

"And," recommenced Ferraro,—when what he was about to add, was stopped short by Czerina, whose haughty feelings, overcoming every other consideration, prompted her to snatch away her hand, as she exclaimed:

"Antoine! I will not answer you another syllable: why will you put me to the question thus, and invent a torture, the hangman never heard of? Demand the false knave who led thee hither, whose visage, belike, is symbolical of his heart. Go, rack thy friend, the African, not me; he knows all you'd ask, and more than that I know, yet would most earnestly."

At that instant, a creaking sound arose, like the shoot-

ing of a bolt, and the dark portrait seemed to tremble in its frame.

"Antoine, he's here," said Czerina, in an hysterical whisper, pressing her bloodless little hand upon his arm, to enforce his acquiescence,—"Will you yet forego your cruel purpose to my entreaty? Heed my wish, as you respect me!"

However, stimulated with a desire to expose what he conceived the villany of the confessor, Ferraro, could not be insensible to such wild and affecting appeals from the being, whom he so truly idolized. He saw evidently, from the state of trepidation and nervous excitement, that to persist in his first intention, would be attended with dangerous consequences. He, therefore, quickly made answer—"Who could hold out against that charm? I, least of all—there, I yield my weak defences up, and will not question him."

"Thank you, dearest," said Czerina, in a low hurried voice, "affectionately pressing the hand of her lover in one of hers, while with the other, she signed him to return to the dark concealment, from whence he first appeared to her."

Mutely replying to the fluttering dove-like index, by obedience, Ferraro ensconced himself in the recess, and the young queen was in the act of gliding from the apartment, as the artificial portal flew open, and through it issued the portentous figure of Father Dominick. He descended to the floor, in the same breathing point of time, that the nearly opposite door closed upon the fairy shape of our heroine.

The monk advanced into the middle of the room, and there halting, looked around him. Ferraro kept his eyes fixed, with a feeling of thrilling curiosity, on every movement of that mysterious man. "Ho! ho!" he cried, in a voice that, for some unknown cause, occasioned Ferraro a revulsion at the heart. He then walked, with measured step, to the door, by which Czerina had just

made her exit; he opened it, looked without for a few moments, then gently re-shut it, and, to Ferraro's involuntary terror, approached the recess. Suddenly stopping, the monk beckoned with his hand, and spake in a deep, hollow tone, "Marc Antoine of Pereny," he said, "come forth!"

Not, if a voice from the bottomless pit of hell, had given out that solemn invocation, could Ferraro have been more startled. His limbs, for an instant, refused their functions, and then it was only by a resolute effort of the will, that his mind triumphed. With composed mien, and drawing himself up to his full height, he came forward, in acknowledgment of the confessor's challenge. Making a sudden halt, he stood, foot to foot, and front to front, before his ghostly summoner. The monk was silent.

"Holy father," said Ferraro, "I am he whom you just named; what would you with me?"

"Follow my steps in silence," said the monk, turning to depart.

"Whither wouldst thou lead me?" inquired Ferraro.

Father Dominick walked straight to the door, through which he and our heroine had first passed into the room. There he paused, and, reverting his head, said, "I am commissioned to conduct thee beyond the outer walls of this palace."

"By whom commissioned?" cried Ferraro, without moving a single pace from the spot where he stood.

"By him, who brought thee hither," replied the monk.

The involuntary start of Ferraro, and his bewildered expression of countenance evidenced his astonishment; yet, still fearing he lay under some delusion, he coldly rejoined, "It may be, holy father, as thou sayest; but what token dost thou bring me of thy truth herein?"

"Demand any sign thou thinkest meet, either in the

depth, or in the height above," responded the monk, solemnly.

" Nay," rejoined Ferraro, doubtfully, " it is not for me to ask, but for thee to establish the reality of thy commission."

" Will it suffice for a warrant of my truth, if I repeat to you the last words, which Scipio used, when he left thee in this chamber ? Thus spoke the friend of Jerome Lascus : — ' Remain in this recess,' he said, ' until my return, or, if I cannot do so conveniently, until the individual, whom I shall appoint to guide you without the palace walls, make his appearance.' Antoine Pereny, I am that person."

It will easily be believed, that Ferraro's surprise was extreme, at hearing, from the mouth of Father Dominick, the very words the black had uttered. As he could not, however, any longer pretend to question the monk's authority, he briefly signified his readiness to attend him, whithersoever it was his pleasure to proceed.

Immediately the monk cautiously opened the door, on the lock of which, for the last minute, his hand had rested. " Keep close by my side, Antoine," he said, and stepped into the adjoining apartment. The envoy of Austria followed. They threaded the intricacies of a range of vacant chambers, which either issued into one another, or were connected by short passages, without lighting upon any one. One of these lobbies terminated in a door, which opened on the landing-place of a massive flight of stone stairs, descending into a lofty hall or vestibule, whence, as Ferraro was aware, from his previous acquaintance with the localities, there was an outlet into the palace gardens.

On emerging through this door, they had to encounter certain men-at-arms, and other retainers of the palace, who were there in waiting. All shrunk back at Father Dominick's appearance, and, in mute horror, they saw him traverse, with measured pace, the distance to the

topmost step, and then slowly disappear down the staircase.

It happened, at that moment, probably owing to some lover-like attributes of Ferraro, either absence of mind, or his loitering, in the hope of being again blessed with a glimpse of his mistress, that Father Dominick had got considerably a-head of his companion, who scarcely presented his well-known person before the liveried group, assembled on the landing-place, ere they sprang forward, to bar his passage with their halberds.

"So, my gay *Nemet*,"* said one of his captors, glad of an opportunity of giving vent to that bitter contempt and antipathy to foreigners, which, from the era of our story down to the present day, makes the national characteristic; "you will be for visiting the royal palace, I trow, after Martinuzzi's orders contrariwise. I hope we don't disarrange your furbelows; but, by the rood of St. Stephen! you must to close quarters, till we inquire the regent's commands as to the nature of your punishment."

Ferraro darted on the speaker that maniac glance, and withering frown, which, when he pleased, could stamp his usual calm and handsome features, with an expression literally diabolical. He had already released his one arm, and was yet struggling further for freedom, when the monk, attracted by the hubbub, mounted the stairs, and re-appeared in sight.

"Liberate him, knaves!" he exclaimed, in that voice of horrid strength,—the expression of an authority which was rarely disputed. Even with the utterance of this command, his captors withdrew their gripe from Ferraro, whom the confessor motioned to immediately descend, and, the next instant, the two were seen to issue forth, from the vestibule, into the garden.

"How mysterious the power and influence of this

* German.

monk!" thought Ferraro, as he followed his guidance in silence; "even in the royal palace, he has privilege of entrance and of outgoing; and there, no less than in the meanest hovel in Hermanstadt, his mandate is instantly obeyed; and yet, not one of those, who acknowledge his authority, as they never would that of the laws, has hitherto set eyes on the countenance, which lurks beneath that cowl, save Czerina, — and she has often! — hem! — if the man means villanously, and that he doth, all things concur to indicate, — I 'd sacrifice a moiety of my existence, to resolve, one way or other, this racking state of doubt; should I lose the present opportunity, another may not speedily recur; I must be satisfied, — but how?"

The mental argument of Ferraro had proceeded to this point, without break or pause, when, as he closed the door of the vestibule, and stepped after the mysterious confessor, beneath the dense and inclement skies, his cogitations and further progress were at the same time somewhat abruptly arrested, by the imposition of divers pairs of hands upon his person, while his ears were simultaneously assailed, by all sorts of objurgation and reproach, in the German tongue. A single voice, however, rose shrill and audible above the united clamour.

"He is one of the murderers," he cried; "I thought, we should secure him by encompassing the palace; seize upon him, and bring him before the Marquis of Piadena."

Ferraro, on recovering from his surprise, saw himself surrounded by more than a hundred Austrians; his arms were already pinioned. He looked on every side for Father Dominick, but that mysterious person was no where to be seen. Under these circumstances, he had nothing for it, but to be borne along upon the stream of events, which were beyond his control.

The Marquis of Piadena, late ambassador of Austria, now prisoner of war, although suffered to remain at large

within the walls of Hermanstadt, had taken up his quarters in one of the mansions of the grand square. It was thither, that Ferraro was hurried by his captors. Beneath the jutting abutment of this house, the party were detained for more than a minute, ere the door was opened. It was during this interval, that Ferraro's attention was attracted, by some one plucking him by the sleeve. He turned his head. Again Father Dominick stood beside him.

"Sift Baptista Castaldo closely," whispered the monk. "Antoine, he is your father's enemy; sift him closely."

"Thou mayest be the same, for aught that appears," replied Ferraro, in the same low tone. "I ask not thy counsel; more, I doubt thy purpose."

"Learn what Castaldo is after; and for me, doubt me, boy, no longer."

Saying these words, the monk half raised his cloth. Ferraro eagerly stooped his head, to catch a view of those features which, at the moment of his seizure, he so burned to behold. He gazed, but instantly started back in surprise, and his eyes seemed enlarged, and almost turned to stone, as they encountered the Gorgonian visage of Scipio, the black. The next minute he was standing in the presence of Piadena.

## MANUSCRIPT XXVIII.

"Scit .... quid valeat virus amantis aquæ."

OVID.

"It is my wonder,
That such mis-shapen guests as lust and murder,
At any price, should ever find a lodging
In such a beauteous inn!"

SHIRLEY.

"Ambrosio! oh! my Ambrosio! sighed Matilda.—Thine, ever thine, murmured the Friar; and sunk upon her bosom."

*The Monk.*

"Into this fatal place, I most solemnly vow,
I innocent entered:—but am I so now?"

G. A. STEVENS.

Νυν θυσῶ, τα πίτυρια.

THEOCRITUS.

Now will I strew the barley bran, to inspire the flames of love.

WE are now approaching the catastrophe of our story, which intimately interweaves with a transaction, that has left an indelible stain on the reputation of Castaldo, and, in even a greater degree implicated the otherwise unsullied honour of his royal master. We allude to the order, transmitted to the Austrian ambassador, for the "making away with Martinuzzi."

That King Ferdinand should meditate such a bloody stroke of policy, presents a melancholy, though not singular instance of human depravity; but for him to reduce his machinations to the form of a state paper, * exhibits a disregard of shame and infamy, which we are inclined to hope, for the honour of our nature, is rarely to be paralleled, even among assassins. From the moment that measures were taken, to realise so iniquitous a conception, not only was every principle of morality lost sight of, or contemned, but the fair structure of international law, which, at the period of our tale, was beginning to disclose itself to the eye of Europe, amid receding cloud and vapour, must have been shaken to its centre.

The Marquis of Piadena, after hearing the accusation preferred against Ferraro, of his having been concerned, with other villains, in the murder of one of his excellency's immediate retainers, directed the apartment to be cleared of every soul, but the accused.

"Now, Marc Antoine," he said to his secretary, as soon as his orders were obeyed, "what is the truth of this matter?"

Ferraro explained the nature of his captor's misapprehension.

Castaldo knit his brows. "What devil put it in thy head to interpose," he said, "between a criminal and the orders of thy government?"

"A criminal — my government!" repeated Ferraro, involuntarily.

"To be sure — thy government," said Castaldo. "What ails thee, sir? Understand, there are three men, now in this city, rank rebels to the lawful authority of the archduke."

* See Letters of Pope Julius to Ferdinand, dated 30th January, 1552, apud Batthyan in serie Episcoporum Chanadiensium, p. 139. See also Forgach Comm. p. 30. and also MS. in Bibliotheca Excellentissimi Domini Episcopi Transilvaniæ Comitis Ignatii de Batthyan, intituled, "Actæ in causa violentæ mortis Georg. Cardinalis."

" Lawful authority!" echoed the secretary.

" By the life of the emperor! Ferraro, thou art strangely dull o' the sudden. Is not our royal master king of Hungary?"

The mind of the Austrian envoy was, indeed, sadly bewildered by the conflict of duties, which his peculiar situation involved, and not knowing exactly in what way he ought to shape his reply, he preserved silence.

" One of these traitors," continued Castaldo, after pausing for an instant, " is that damned Per —, I would say, is the black — Scipio, I think they call him — the same whose life thou heedlessly savedst."

A curdling sensation crept through the veins of Ferraro, which with difficulty he prevented himself from betraying.

" The other is one, who has too long been suffered to make this land one vast theatre of dread and mystification: — the ghost of Father Dominick may walk the vaults of Hermanstadt, if such be its spiritual taste; but his body shall henceforth lie where priests tell us, the 'wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest,' — in the dark restriction of the tomb."

Ferraro, though every moment more startled, was prompted, by several concurrent causes, to put such a curb over his feelings, as to preclude the possibility of Castaldo penetrating his real sentiments; he recalled the solemn bidding of the monk, as he entered the house, — " He is your father's enemy, sift him to the core."

Therefore, on Castaldo again pausing for a reply, his secretary, after a minute's consideration, rendered it by saying—

" You named another traitor, my lord, if I mistook not; may I inquire, who is to follow in the wake of this bloody jubilee?"

" Undoubtedly you may, Ferraro," replied Castaldo; " and the rather, that I intend you the honour of serving your country, by closing his career.

"Serving my country!" thought Ferraro, as the marquis hesitated, ere he added—

"He, who will make the third in the triumvirate of death, is Cardinal Martinuzzi."

Ferraro, however irritated of late at certain proceedings of Martinuzzi,..his harsh treatment of Czerina,—his preventing all personal communication between the lovers,—his determination to bestow the queen of Hungary on some fautorer of his own,—the mode, where insult aggravated injury, in which, since Martinuzzi's return to Hermanstadt, the envoy had been denied admission to the palace;—however exasperated from these various causes, Ferraro felt not a little indignant, at the heartless perfidy of the court of Vienna. Still, with whatever difficulty, he controlled his temper, and preserved silence.

"It is the intention of Ferdinand," presently observed the marquis, to bestow the hand of the puppet queen, mewed up in yon palace, on some private gentleman, born in his Austrian dominions, by which means, he will bar all claim of her descendants to the throne. The royal maid is left to my disposal, and, but that these messengers of time," he continued, laying his hand upon his head, "admonish me to be wary, I would wed her myself. That being, however, out of the question, I propose transferring my right to the man, who shall rid her of her chiefest enemy and tyrant,—this overgrown cardinal."—Ferraro started. "Now, Antoine," he continued: "I have a regard for you, because you came to me, recommended by a man, I have long held in reverence, the good old Jerome Lascus, with whose house I once,—but that is foreign to the purpose. I understand, moreover, you have conceived an attachment to the Lady Czerina. Prithee, no blushing,—'tis well,—'tis very well,—'tis an additional incentive."

"Incentive," exclaimed Ferraro, unable any longer

to restrain himself; "Good God! my lord, what do you mean?"

"Mean, Marc Antoine," replied Castaldo, in a slow and determined tone of voice; "mean!—why, that as surely, as that you and I now breathe, Martinuzzi will be silenced, and the man who does the deed, shall wed the daughter of the last king of Hungary. Nay, never start, and look concerned, and purse thy brows. Ferdinand's word is irreversible; I have it pledged, and thou art he, whom I have pitched upon, to do the state this service; and what is more, an thou likest the wench, this pleasure to thyself."

"My lord," answered Ferraro; "I can settle the point by a word, at once and for ever,—it can never be."

"Antoine,—Marc Antoine," said the marquis, "by your leave, I will dismiss you, and the subject of our present conference together. Another time, and we'll re-discuss it,—I am now engaged,—silence: make no rash vows,—the matter is not immediately urgent. You can reflect upon the alternative. The maid in your arms, and wealth in your coffers: or the maid in the arms of some more daring, and less scrupulous young gentleman. I have my eye on many now in Hermanstadt, would sell their souls for a dinner, leave alone a bedfellow. Or the maid, I say, in the arms of some don or signor, and your purse never the heavier. You may make your choice. No word, sir. What, ho! who waits? My secretary," he continued to those who now entered the apartment; "has satisfied me of his innocence, in that matter, you charged him with erewhiles,—let him go free. Good den, Ferraro,—wait upon me, at midnight. If you fail me," he added, in a lower tone; "I shall employ some one of my captive retinue, who better understands his interest. At midnight; and by all means gather wisdom in the interim. Bring with thee, thy acquiescence in writing to act according to my wish, in return for which,

thou shalt receive, under my hand and seal, the covenant of our government, to help thee to the hand of this royal maiden. Enough; at midnight I shall expect you." And with these words, delivered in a tone, which implied, that no reply would be received, the panic-stricken Ferraro was literally bowed out of the chamber.

In a state of feverish excitement, with burning brow, and a mind almost distraught, by a variety of vague and conflicting images, Ferraro rushed from the abode of his late lord and patron. The callous, calculating cold-bloodedness, with which the marquis, in ignorance of his secretary's newly discovered rank and parentage, disclosed his infamous project, and proposed to him the perpetration of so vile an action, as the assassination of the regent, horrified every faculty of his soul. Inflamed from patriotic motives, with rage and indignation against Ferdinand and his minister, while no less, as a man, his nature was revolted, by their treacherous and sanguinary machinations, Ferraro's brain for the next half hour after he left the presence of Castaldo, reeled with the influx of bewildering thoughts, till reason well nigh tottered on her throne. How was he to act? By what procedure could he most surely blast so murderous an intent? Martinuzzi's life, he knew, was safe for the present, because Piadena had stated, that he would not move in the matter, till after he received his secretary's answer,—but the African. Even now Ferraro trembled, lest his friend might be falling beneath the assassin's steel; and not until to-morrow midnight, at which time, Scipio had promised to introduce him to his father, would he have an opportunity of warning him of his danger. Then suddenly, the thought crossed his mind, that, that Scipio, whom he had been instructed to regard, with almost filial reverence, was no other than Father Dominick himself; and the thrilling dismay, with which Ferraro recalled the fact, was hardly inferior to that, which overcame him, when he first peered beneath the

drooping cowl of the incomprehensible confessor. In every way, horror encompassed the unhappy Ferraro.

If Martinuzzi were slain, by the agent of Castaldo, that agent was to be requited, by the hand of Czerina. If the cardinal survived, he was bent on bestowing the peerless daughter of John Zapola, on one of his own creatures.

Harassed by such reflections, and maddened by evil suggestions of his own violent and passionate nature, Ferraro wandered awhile, he knew not whither—a desperate horror seemed to lock up his faculties, when, happening for an instant to recollect himself, he perceived, that he stood beneath the ruinous porchway, where he and Scipio had taken shelter, during that interesting conference, which preceded such a variety of incidents. Instantaneously, a new idea struck the excited mind of Ferraro—his sole gleam of comfort arose from the mysterious powers, which Father Dominick undoubtedly possessed, and he resolved at all risks, to seek an interview with the confessor, by means of the secret passage. As he revolved over in his thoughts the various hazards, incident to his suddenly conceived project, and the probability that, after all, they would be run to no purpose, his hands groped about the ground, in hopes of discovering the artifice of the trap-door. It was after a tedious research, and, just as he began to despair of accomplishing his task, that, by the merest accident, he ascertained the nature of the mechanism, and, being equally successful with the secret spring of the door, which terminated the passage, he found himself again, in that lofty chamber, where, not long before, he had held discourse with Czerina. It was unoccupied. Ferraro crossed over to the portrait, and having easily caused it to revolve on its hinges, he passed into a sort of corridor. This went on apparently for the whole length of the building : it contained a single window on one side, and at the extremity, were two opposite doors, corresponding with one another. Thither

Ferraro bent his steps, and, after pausing for a single second, opened, at hazard, that to his right. He looked within, and would have precipitately retreated, on finding, he had unwittingly intruded, upon the sacred precincts of a lady's dressing-room. The style of the furniture, and of all that his eyes lit upon, was a fine comment on the sentiment of the courtezan, in a play of Plautus :

" Munditia illecebra animo est amantum."*

Odoriferous and rare exotic plants, arranged on stands, or placed in Etruscan vases, diffused their grateful perfume deliciously around. The floor was covered with Herat carpeting; the walls were hung with pink silk, drawn up in graceful festoons; a few costly tomes, mingled with instruments of music, were spread out upon the side table; other articles of a miscellaneous character, in requisition with the fair sex, lay about indifferently. " Vanities of tires"†—(" O spectacle de volupte!")‡ " Les vestes and les broderies, et les toiles si deliées, ces vaines couvertures qui ne cachent rien,"§—were carefully disposed, or negligently laid aside on the several elegant couches and embroidered sofa seats, which corresponded with the hangings, and with which, as with other comfortable accommodations, and accessaries of luxury, the apartment abounded. Ferraro, was in the act of withdrawing as gently as possible, when a low and thrilling voice stole upon his ear. Oh, how his heart bounded in his bosom! he would have rushed from the spot, but some spell seemed to nail him where he stood.

" Who is there?" said the fair interrogator. " Is't Clarinda?—Gertrude?—speak." Receiving no answer, the genius loci—the divinity of that Circean chamber, uprising from her seat, on a pile of cushions at the farther end of the salon, with slow and majestic carriage, advanced to the door, and flung it open. No sooner,

* Menœchmei, Act 2. Sc. 3. l. 4.

† Shirley. ‡ La Nouvelle Heloise.

§ Bossuet: Sermon pour la profession de Mad. de la Vallière.

however, did she cast her eyes on him, who, having doffed his glittering cap, stood trembling at the entrance, than without taking a second glance, her whole frame shook with an electrical sensation, and uttering a piercing exclamation, she staggered back several paces.

It would, in truth, be hard to say, whether the agitation of Ferraro, or that of Isabella, for the following minute, were the more excessive. The lady, however, was the first to assert the mind's sovereignty, and re-assume her wonted command over her feelings,—still it was with a failing voice, and embarrassed air, that she broke the thrilling silence.

" Marc Antoine Ferraro," she said, " Thou there? this is an honour, which,—but really,—to what miracle are we indebted for your visit?"

" Ferraro returned some broken and hurried reply, in which the words, " pardon," and " unintentional obtrusion," were all that were intelligible.

" Unintentional, sir!—oh, of course," returned the queen, with bitterness. " Our acts, nay, our lightest words are so many additional threads, fearfully interwoven, throughout that web of destiny, in which our every movement is entangled. Unintentional! Can mortality reach the object of fate, or if so, resist his will? Oh, sir, never doubt, this dung of earth hath order in it, though it looks one vast phantasma, and the life, which it inherits but an idle dream, or else—but it suffices, thou art here to my wish —although i' faith," she added, with a smile, that played over the surface of her pale cheek, like moonshine on some monumental alabaster, cold and uncherishing,— " i' faith, thou must walk in thy sleep, Ferraro, or wherefore art thou here?" She paused, and then continued in a lower tone, " Can circumstance thus leap to our embrace, and the devil conjure, with a thought? My soul! it is a fearful apprehension that!"

Again Isabella broke off, muttering to herself, as if mentally debating some inscrutable, and doubtful point.

Ferraro felt his situation every moment becoming more and more embarrassing. A cold damp stood on his forehead, and, in doubt and hesitation, he continued silent.

" Ferraro," said Isabella, after deeply ruminating for more than a minute, " prithee, enter, — be not afeard. I am indebted to that invisible and omnipotent power, that led thee hither, without thine own volition, for an opportunity, which I were an ingrate to let escape ; — enter, Ferraro."

" An opportunity," thought Ferraro, with an involuntary start, as he sent his sight around the magnificently furnished apartment, — " for what, in Heaven's name ?"

" Art thou grown into a statue, sir, since — what dost view in my chamber, that so absorbest thy vision ? Antoine, stand not, with the door ajar, but enter, and I will show thee all its rarities."

It is probable, that Ferraro would have exhibited, at once, an equal deficiency in policy and *politesse*, by declining Isabella's somewhat startling invitation, if he had not recollected, that it was Czerina's wish, he should implore her mother to interpose, between her and the threatened tyranny of her guardian. Therefore, in obedience to the directions of Isabella, he stepped into her apartment, and closed the door. Even in the instant, he almost repented the facility of his acquiescence, not a little startled to observe the queen approach the door, and shoot a small bolt into its fastening, and then cross the apartment to an inner entrance, to secure that in like manner.

" We must not risk being interrupted," she remarked, with a half smile ; " but rest thee, Antoine ;" and the queen, motioning him, to seat himself beside her, extended her graceful form in luxurious ease, upon an ottoman.

The heart of Ferraro, as he suffered himself to sink mechanically upon the cushion, misgave him. Never ; not even in the vernal development of her charms,

did Queen Isabella look more enchantingly beautiful, than at that moment. The low couch, on which she partly seated, partly reposed herself, in that half withdrawn, that *semi-reducta** attitude, which the poet attributes to Venus herself, was posited under a lofty and heraldic casement, whose stained and diamonded panes blushed, with blood of kings. Such a medium admitted only a subdued light, and tempered the glare of day, into a most dim, rosy mist, which, like a vaporous ruby, pervaded the apartment.

The lineaments of Isabella's countenance, finished with such exquisite regularity, were consequently thrown into that soft and mellowing shadow, so agreeable to the meridian character of her beauty, and so grateful to the imagination of the beholder. Her loosened *pourpoint*, — she was divested of her exterior robe of crimson velvet, having been interrupted in the middle of her toilet operation, — disclosed the fine proportions of those glowing charms, it was meant to hide, and looked, to use the words of Leigh Hunt, on a picture of Lely, as if the artist had said, " Only stop a moment, my dear, before you finish your dressing, and I will take you in that attitude." The exquisite grace of her half-reclining posture, which set off the sinuous symmetry of her figure, and displayed the contour of every lovely limb, — the breathless voluptuousness of her countenance, half-upraised,—the tremulous curve of her ripe coral lip,—the full and rounded throat, flowing, with curvilinear beauty, into the perfect bust and polished shoulders, from whence the retiring edges of fine lace fell carelessly away, leaving the delicate treasure beneath exposed to the eye, in ravishing glimpses, each more precious, if not costly, than those priceless pearls, her loveliness was wont to adorn, and which now beamed refulgent, from an open trinket-case, on a near table, — the heaving of her chest,

* Ovid.

evincing the deep and tumultuous thoughts, that surged within, — the snow-white and taper fingers, on which her cheek leaned, contrasting with the dishevelled richness of her raven tresses, where the warm gules, from the scutcheoned casement, lighted, like a glory, — the soft and sleepy air, which her long, dark lashes, drooping over her swimming eyes, gave to her countenance, — the delicate little feet and ancles, consciously betrayed, and unconsciously twinkling, in the excitement of the moment, — all combined to form a portrait of such entrancing effect, that never (did one credit the doctrine of metempsychosis) could poetry conceive a more meet tenement, to lodge the migrating spirit of a Cleopatra, or an Aspasia.

"Sic Venus optaret mortalibus ipsa videri."*

The moment was critical, and became the more dangerous, on account of those accessories of loveliness, and appliances to luxury, with which the apartment teemed; so that Ferraro, as his eyes glanced over that incomparable profile, half turned in silent thoughtfulness from his observation, could only internally pray, that the bewitching being before him, did not propose any trial of his constancy and firmness.

"Aid me, virtue, or I am lost!" he thought to himself, as he sat and gazed, and felt his constancy "oozing away," like the valour of Bob Acres, "at his fingers' ends."

The contemplation of the syren obliterated, for a while, every other impression on his heart. He turned away his eyes, and, fixing them upon the ground, sighed involuntarily.

It was after a long and embarrassing pause, that Isabella resumed the conversation. Drawing a rich wimple more closely over the round, full beauty, of her neck and bosom, she turned to Ferraro, and said, with

* Milton, Eleg. 7.

a soft smile, " Well, Antoine, though I can hardly persuade myself, that my beholding you be not an illusion of my senses, I will not ask, by what conjuration thou hast obtained admission into the palace, I confine myself to a single inquiry ; — tell me, what motive had you, in seeking an interview ?"

Ferraro hesitated, ere he ventured any reply, for the thought suddenly struck him, that it would be as well, to leave Isabella in her present persuasion, of his having intentionally obtruded on her privacy. Remembering our heroine's wish, he immediately proceeded, in pathetic terms, to dilate on the agony of Czerina, at the contemplated sacrifice of her hand to the Richter Iwan. He then pleaded the truth of his own passion, and, in conclusion, carried away by his feelings, adjured Isabella, by all she held dear on earth, to interpose her authority, to avert the threatened union.

The royal lady heard him to a close, in silence, and, save by a slight quivering of the nether lip, that abruptly paled its previous coral hue, and by the colour, that overspread and faded on her cheek, and then re-rose with a fitful rapidity, she gave no perceptible token of interest in the relation. When he had done, however, she briefly observed, in a low tone, while a faint, and sickly smile played about her mouth, " In truth, Antoine, I never met a braver man than thou art, — that thou shouldst tell me this ?"

" What have I told ?" returned Ferraro, involuntarily.

A dangerous expression mantled the brow of Isabella. She raised her eyes ; those of Antoine sunk beneath the encounter. " What told ? — what told ?" she cried, in a voice, whose tone, although evidently suppressed, sounded thrillingly loud, on the ear of Ferraro, — " what told ? — *to me* ? nay, tis rank ! — why, sir," she paused, biting her lip, and then, in a milder key, she added, " nothing at all, — just nothing."

"Madam," said Ferraro, "what mean you? I thought ——"

"Marc Antoine Ferraro," interrupted Isabella, with peculiar dignity and animation, "let there be no mistake in this. I dream not of the past, and am, besides, of better temper, than to cure my honour with any strange revenge; yet, troth, I have heard tell of women, who — yea, have seen some such — and do myself believe, it were more wise of you to start the sleeping panther, and stare into her eye, than do such things; but I repeat, though I were other than what I am, you would not nettle me, — not, sir, a whit, — I harbour no malice."

"Indeed, your grace," replied Ferraro, "it was your daughter's will, I should implore your protection for her;— she did command me, on my love, to speak to you."

"Yes, yes, I know," returned Isabella, impatiently. "The theme slides from your tongue; you've spoken it before. She is proud, and boasts she will not wed the Richter Iwan, and she grows eloquent, and — how else was it? let me hear."

Ferraro was recommencing some appeal to the maternal feelings of Isabella, when the queen again spoke.

"There—enough—sure I know, what you would say; but what can I do? It is the regent's match;— I have no voice in't."

"Insist, madam, that it shall not be," answered Ferraro.

"Insist!" echoed Isabella, scornfully. "How idle! That man, sir, will not be argued with;— remonstrance cannot reach his pinnacle of greatness."

"Is he so high? He may be nearer blasting," said Ferraro, in a low, meaning voice.

"Thou dost not say amiss," returned Isabella, significantly. "But prithee, Antoine, be not moved. If Martinuzzi wills it, the Richter weds my daughter."

"He shall not!" exclaimed Ferraro, passionately. "I know one way, at least; be assured, he shall not."

"Indeed!" said Isabella, with an almost imperceptible sneer. "What would you do? Build your own tomb, and run into it living?"

"No, I will die!" said Ferraro, with strong emotion.

"Like a child, i' the sulks," returned Isabella; "or woman, whose will is thwarted; or, meaner still, a slave—*a slave*, Ferraro, restive in his bonds—that fears his master. Die, like a dog! For shame! A man like you, to let his passion betray his reason thus! Is not this valiant now? Will thy death prevent my daughter's marriage? If Martinuzzi have determined upon the match, the Richter weds her, sir, whether you live or die."

"Oh God!" cried Ferraro.

"I see no help, Antoine," continued Isabella, with a sigh, moving insidiously nearer to him, as she spoke, and letting her soft hand light gently upon his. "Alas! there is none—on earth—if Heaven, indeed—but prayers are beaten back, and hell must dower her votaries with impassiveness—or, long ago——. No, dear Antoine, Czerina must obey."

Ferraro seized hold of the little hand, the mute enclosure of whose ivory fingers in return, thrilled through his whole frame. The soft pressure implied a meaning, that no eloquence could do justice to—

> "Ne'er magician's wand,
> Wrought change, with all Armida's fairy art,
> Like what this light touch left upon his heart." *

It was with trembling accents, he spoke, looking earnestly into Isabella's face.

"You say, if Heaven,—and can then Heaven? Dear madam, tell me."

* Don Juan.

"Did you not, awhile ago, speak of *blasting*, Antoine? But no, it ought not to be hoped for. The Heavens, dear sir, at times, show like the Cyclops; and the subtlest slave may laugh at vengeance."

"Thou art an oracle," said Ferraro, for the first time fixing his own eagle eyes on those bright orbs of Isabella, whence flew the sparkles forth, like Cupid's arrows; "and dost mean something,—interpret for me? I know no subtle slave:—*whom* dost point at?"

"The Heavens, Antoine, we are told," replied Isabella, throwing her right bare arm carelessly over his shoulder; while, approaching still closer, she lifted up her face till her lips, and those of Ferraro, almost met,—"can choke the breath they gave;—or else shine out to deplume ambition's wings. Have you not heard of some such matter? But he, whose name I loathe, strides o'er the prostrate land, and reigns, and soars, and lives, in fate's despite,—and will for ever, as I think. Heaven!—Heaven is struck blind, and rayless; and thou, and all men living, are tame as dirt!"

Ferraro was silent for a few moments,—his eyes dwelt upon vacancy. "Oh!" at last he murmured to himself, "I am very wretched!"

"To thy shame, Antoine," said Isabella; "there's no man need be miserable, save him, that makes himself so—but thou art faint, and turnest pale. What is it aileth thee?"

Ferraro, in silent anguish, disengaged his hand, and rising from the soft couch, paced the chamber, with a rapid, but an irregular step. Isabella followed him. He leant against the door for support. Isabella leaned over him.

Contending passions had tugged at the heart of Ferraro, unintermittingly, for many preceding hours, during which interval, the *vis animi* had not been sustained by any bodily aid and refreshment;—he felt his brain, in sympathy with his heart, heated and feverish;—his throat

was parched — his powers of sufferance seemed, to himself, quite worn out.

"Antoine," said Isabella, "be more a man, if thou wouldst not, that Martinuzzi trench his power in thine, and Czerina's, peace. Bethink thee." She paused, and then added, in a low tone, that thrilled upon every nerve; "*Is there no way ?*"

Some faltering reply was on the lip of Ferraro, when their eyes met for a moment, and his voice grew so weak, that the faint murmur he breathed forth, was scarce distinguishable from silence. A peculiar smile played upon the features of Isabella, and she fixed him by a look, so mysterious and terrible, that Ferraro, instinctively, trembled, and presently turned away his head, with a sensation of horror.

"My God ! how thy hands burn, Antoine," said the queen.

"To my touch, so do thine," replied Ferraro; "but, in truth, I have a craving thirst."

Isabella moved towards a canopied recess, beneath which was a sort of buffet, appropriated to liqueurs, conserves, &c. It was manufactured of some curious wood, ingrained with marble, and supported by four figures of Cupid, from the antique. At that spot, with her back to Ferraro, she remained for several moments, and then returned, bearing a massive silver cup, crowned to the brim, with some sparkling liquor.

"Drink, dear Antoine," said the lady; "'twill revive thy flagging spirit."

Ferraro took the proffered libation, forgetful of all else, but how he might best allay the heat and fever in his blood, he raised the grateful liquid to his lips.

"Gracious madam," he cried, "may all thy wishes ever meet a quick fulfilment, even as mine do now." Saying these words, the rash youth took a deep and delicious draught. Another—and then Ferraro placed the empty goblet on a table, that stood convenient.

The day, throughout, had been dark and tempestuous, and now the shades of twilight deepened, more and more, till the countenances of Ferraro, and Queen Isabella, as they sat, side by side, on the low couch, were gradually veiled from each other, in the increasing gloom. A raging torrent, boiled in the veins of Ferraro ;— he attributed it to the vinous juice, acting on an excited mind, and enfeebled frame, little imagining that other, and more stimulating ingredients, were mingled in that potent concoction, he had incautiously quaffed. Wrapt about in the dangerous obscurity of the hour, a hushed stillness pervading the apartment, that deepened, at intervals, by contrast with the roaring of the gusty wind without, and solitude, insinuating into the passionate heart her mystic language, Isabella sat with Ferraro.

Human infirmity was incident to the Austrian envoy, as to every other man. We do not undertake to describe "a faultless monster that the world ne'er saw." Even in breasts where religion and morality hold far greater influence, than ever they possessed, over that of Ferraro, religion and morals must have been alike extinguished, before the delirious excitement of that hour, if prudence had not provided a mithridate, against the dangerous temptation. In this conservative and cardinal virtue, Ferraro was deficient; though, indeed, had he been ever so wary, he might hardly have suspected Isabella's purpose. From the moment, however, that he drained the intoxicating cup, which she presented him, his guardian angel seemed to have flown. That inclination for Isabella, which he had believed inurned for ever, re-rose, in all its original excess, and burst through those cerements, which honour, pure love for another, and temporary estrangement, had wrapped about the buried passion. With his renewed attachment, the long-sealed fountains of his heart were opened afresh; and while his whole frame seemed composed of a single nerve, his tongue ran on, in a golden strain of poetry, which, as it

owed much to the fervour of delivery, much to the soft magic of his voice, and perhaps not a little to grace of action, we despair, by any effort of ours, to convey to the reader.

Dusky twilight rapidly darkened into night, and as their persons drew nearer, their hearts (at least so Ferraro deemed) seemed the more closely to re-unite. Still, with that inconsistency, which he alone can reconcile, to whom the secret and latent springs and workings of the human mind are no secret, Ferraro, even in this reeling of his senses, would recur to the object of his interview, and reiterate his petition to Isabella, to interpose between Czerina, and the tyrannous design of Martinuzzi.

"I am but a weak woman, dear Antoine," said the lady, in reply to one of these entreaties, preferred with increasing earnestness. "So long as the man, we speak of, sways my daughter's sceptre, he'd sweep away any obstacle of mine, like chaff, before the whirlwind of his authority. As I told you, awhile ago, I can descry no hope, while it suits Heaven to smile upon his treasons. Why, the man is still in the prime of life, Ferraro, and all, who wither beneath his pestilent shade, shrink, it seems to me, into idiotism, or else lack gall and manhood. No, there's no reprieve—none."

"The thought thy words suggest, runs through me, like a fever," cried Ferraro. "God! what a buzzing is here: feel, dear Isabella!"

The tender epithet caused the nerves of the queen to thrill. She breathed hard, but one single suspiration, that escaped, in spite of herself, from her panting bosom, was louder than her breathing. Ferraro took her hand, and placed it on his forehead.

"It throbs, indeed, my love," said Isabella, and the tones of her voice were subdued, nearly to a whisper. "Let me press it for you—lean on me."

They drew still nearer, and in the gradation of their

mutual forgetfulness, Ferraro declined his head on the bosom of Isabella.

" I never thought," said Isabella, in a murmur, as low as it was tremulous, " to clasp again the one sole thing in all this world I deigned to covet. Oh! it is sweet, Antoine!"

Stooping, she imprinted a kiss—no, not a kiss—but a long, long pressure of her lips, far more significant of affection, on that flushed cheek, the uppermost; the other nestled voluptuously on love's own pillow.

O! ces baisers qu'une voluptueuse langeur nous fesait lentement savourer! *

" For God's sake, let us speak of something else," cried the queen, abruptly, in a broken voice, and after a pause.

" How your heart beats! dear lady," said Ferraro, almost unconsciously.

" Nay, did I not bid you speak of something else?—My daughter, sir, if the tyrant insist, she must wed Iwan."

" No, by G—d! not," exclaimed Ferraro. " And yet," he added, more despondingly; " what will be, will come,† there's no opposing destiny."

" Destiny!" cried Isabella, indignantly; " is Martinuzzi blown to such a greatness, he must not be opposed? I'd cut the throat ——."

" Whose throat, in Heaven's name?" demanded Ferraro, eagerly.

" Rest thee, love," returned Isabella, again pressing her burning lip on Ferraro's cheek: " rest thee,—THE DESTINY's,—that's all. You need not fly out so."

" Thy words are fire, turns all to flame it meets with," cried Ferraro; " thou must mean something,—explain yourself." *The answer of Isabella, was a mute pressure of the hand of Ferraro.*

* La Nouvelle Heloise.

† το μελλον ηξει.—A sentiment, perhaps more suited to the mouth of Cassandra, than that of Ferraro.

"Yet silent? Nevertheless, how loud thy dumbness! Oh God! methinks the stillness of thy soul is fraught with more turbulent horrors, than is a madhouse, with the contending din of tortured and tormentors. How would you have me think?"

"How think, Antoine? why, like a hero,—if not, at least a man, or like aught else, whose thoughts are deeds,—think! Oh that now you could but read my heart! the burning language there might teach you ——."

"If thou wilt, expound the page to me," said Ferraro.

"Why, Antoine," replied Isabella, "were I as thou, and loved as thou dost, about to be despoiled of all thy hopes, as thou wilt shortly be, ask me not what I'd think, but what I'd perpetrate." There was a deep meaning in the peculiar emphasis, with which Isabella delivered these words, that made Ferraro shudder.

"Thou turnest my thoughts," he said, in a horrific voice; "into the mirror of my secret soul, which shows a gulf of darkness. The reflection tortures me; lady, I ask, what would you perpetrate?"

"Why should one's enemy be longer-lived than other men?" answered Isabella; "it should be remedied, and were I like you,—*I'd stab* ——," she broke off, grasping Ferraro's hand convulsively.

"Stab!" repeated Ferraro, gasping for breath;—"whom? myself?"

"Thyself! dear Antoine," replied the queen, with a smile upon her lip: "that were sage counsel — No, THE CARDINAL."

"The cardinal!" repeated Ferraro, in a tremulous and hollow voice; "what cardinal? I shake!"

"Thou dost, indeed," said Isabella; and with the view of quieting to rest the trepidation, which suddenly seized every nerve of the Austrian secretary, she strained him firmly to her, by the strong folding of her arms. Why was it, that the lover of Czerina did not

shrink from that delirious embrace? Alas! he could not resist the spell, that darkly bound him. His aching head hung, half unconsciously, upon the alabaster shoulders of the queen; and it was her bosom that heaved so wildly, beneath the passionate throbbings of his heart.

"I shake," repeated Ferraro; "what is the hour?—Is't midnight? It is as dark. It must be. Your victim comes, Piadena,—only do you perform your part of our engagement, and I will enact mine."

Saying these words, Ferraro burst abruptly from the encircling embrace of Isabella, and began to traverse the apartment. Ere he had taken many steps, he tottered, and fell. It appeared, that the sort of opiate, with which Isabella had drugged his cup, tended to inebriate, so to speak, his bodily powers, without to a like extent, clouding his mental faculties. Isabella silently left the room, but presently returned, bearing a waxen taper, with which she proceeded to illuminate several small silver lamps, which, while they cast the whole apartment into light, diffused, likewise, an entrancing odour, such as enervates the thinking faculties, and wraps the whole being in Elysium. Then, having replenished the inebriating cups, she, with some difficulty, assisted Ferraro to his former position on the low couch, and bending softly over him, whispered, as she pressed her scorching lips to his flushed cheek:

"I will kiss my love into life and smiles again. Revive thee, dearest!"

Ferraro made no answer: he did not turn from the maddening endearment of that contact, nor avoid the meaning fire of that long gaze; but, on the contrary, it rather seemed, that he drank in at his eyes the contagion of her glances, and as they sat, with hands interlocked, and breath intermixed, every pore of Ferraro seemed to thrill with a new sense, as if he had imbibed a portion of that electric spirit, which ran its course, like lava, through the veins of Isabella.

" And the blood in their fingers intertwined,
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,
As the swift emotions went and came,
Through the veins of each united frame."*

" The turbulent and stormy elements of sin and desire were aroused even to madness, within them."† By a mutual and uncontrollable impulse, the lips of this guilty and devoted pair drew nearer and nearer, till they met, and clung into quick faint kisses. Big drops from heaven wept against the casement,—Ferraro recked not what it might mean. Mournfully wailed the wind,—Isabella's ears received no impression. Low thunder muttered in the air, but neither heeded the minatory accents.—What, to them, was fear or care beyond ?

" Their hearts' beat here."‡

It was during one of those languid pauses, which necessarily intermit the soft communion of affection;—after " cet abattement si doux plus delicieux encore,"§—that Isabella broke that impressive charm, so fraught with dreaming of the voiceless heart, so imbued with the sweet melody of thought,—so eloquent in the thrilling utterance of looks,

" Harmonizing silence without a sound."‖

" Antoine," she murmured; " you spake awhile ago, of Piadena,—of some engagement at midnight—say, dear, what is't?" Ferraro started from her embrace.

" Ask me not," he replied, in a voice of uncontrollable horror: " Ask me not,—rather aid me to stifle all remembrance of the deed, that he would have put me to,—let me forget myself, and all the world,—in these dear arms."

" What deed?" demanded Isabella. Ferraro groaned,—

* Shelley.
† Bulwer.
‡ Don Juan.
§ La Nouvelle Heloise.
‖ Shelley.

he did not answer. "Oh speak," said Isabella, "I mark you to a syllable."

"Such an one, lady," replied Ferraro, in a low, trembling, and awe-struck tone, "whose very apprehension, like a spectre, shuns the wide gaze of day, to gibber within the dim and inmost cavern of my thoughts, shrouded in formless horror." This reply only whetted the anxiety of Isabella, who, with intermingled blandishments, questioned him further.

Few men in an hour of amorous dalliance, can withhold a secret from their fair companion. Draught after draught did Ferraro quaff of the same fatal inebrient, that had already proved so baneful. "Delicious poison!"—but neither more deadly nor more sweet, than that flood of passion, which he simultaneously inspired, from the deep and powerful light of those eyes, whose beams, like moonlight, swayed at will, the tempest of his thoughts. After such insidious inescations, who can doubt the success of Isabella? In that unholy confessional, where Ferraro was brought to his knees, the least concealment or reservation was accounted a sin to the divinity of love, nor did Isabella desist from her inquiries, and absolve her devoted lover, till she had extorted from him, an account of all the eventful scenes, through which he had passed that day. He related to her the secret of his birth,—his engagement to join Scipio, beneath the ruinous porchway, on the following midnight, with the view of being introduced to his father,—the mode, by which he obtained ingress to the palace. These matters, interrupted with those soupirs entrecoupés, ces douces larmes et ces gemissemens tendres, so touchingly enumerated by St. Preux, did Ferraro deliver into the attentive ear of Isabella. Whatever her surprise, at receiving such pieces of information, it was trifling, when compared with the entranced interest, with which she listened to Ferraro's detail of his interview, that morning with the Marquis of Piadena. The unhappy youth had, by this time,

in a great measure, lost all observation of outward things, or he would scarcely have failed to remark the extraordinary emotion, which Isabella discovered at his relation. Every additional syllable, that issued, from her victim's lips, was welcomed, by a look of triumph, so exulting, so malicious, so truly fiendish, that had Ferraro not been utterly blinded by passion and vinolency, he must have shrunk back aghast, from the flowery edge of that abyss, over which his soul tottered. When he had concluded, she thought deeply for several moments, ere she spoke.

"And you are to carry this written consent, to-night to Piadena?" she observed, with some abstraction of manner,—after a long pause.

"At midnight, he proposed," answered Ferraro, "as if—even midnight,—and 'tis winter, lady,—yet hark, how the heavens mutter!—hath a pall to wrap about a purpose so vile, as that he named."

The brow of Isabella flushed with a still deeper shade of thought. "To-night, Antoine," she repeated, without paying attention to Ferraro's last words; "'tis a close game;—it wants an hour, scarcely,—then how—?"

With these incoherent musings, she gently unclasped the arm, which circled the empire of her charms, and insensibly drawing herself from Ferraro's side, rose from that guilty sofa-seat. Every motion indicated, that her bosom worked, with some strong conception. After taking a single turn, with sharp, irregular step, she paused in the middle of the apartment, and there stood, lost in deep meditation.

"Dear lady!" inarticulately murmured Ferraro.

"At midnight, saidst thou?" returned Isabella, abstractedly. "A written paper, too, interchanged between ye? So—you may talk forward—my daughter's hand the guerdon,—did it not run so? And Martinuzzi, who, like the fabulous ferryman, hath wafted souls to hell;—himself immortal all the while,—to be plunged thither,

at length, and *by thee!* My course is clearer than the sun's." She paused; a lightning spirit flashed, from the heaven of her eyes. "So so," she went on, in an indrawn and exulting tone: "my Lord Castaldo, we are your slave for this; I'd rather, than angels sing a requiem at my hearse, that he were dead; I would, by Heavens! And now, to gain my ends, and yet omit the sin and peril of this action!— that the imperial court should stake its credit and fair fame, on that I purposed! it is so wonderful — so beyond the compass of my brains, that it looks more than natural? Is't hell, or Heaven, that thus tops my wishes, and smooths my path before me? Let me think."

She took several turns in the apartment, and then approaching Ferraro, who had sunk on the sofa totally exhausted, and now reclined there, in a state not far removed from unconsciousness, she took his hands in hers:—"Antoine," she said, in a soft and thrilling tone, that discorded strangely with the dreadful purport of her words, "thou wilt write this promise for Piadena."

"What promise, lady?" returned Ferraro, in a feeble voice.

"That which insures youth and beauty to thy arms, Antoine; wouldst thou desire to reap so rich a harvest, as Czerina to wife, thou must begin in blood, and right her wrongs, and in her wrongs,— mine, thine own, and country's. Piadena said well, Antoine Pereny. The tyrant of Erdély must die,—and, if it be a sin, 'tis well requited."

"Let, then, some other do the deed,— not I," cried Ferraro.

"Some other be it then. What say you to the Richter Iwan? Shall he strike the blow, and wed my daughter?"

"No, no!" exclaimed Ferraro; "only I, will wed her."

"Then thou must right her wrongs, Antoine, in the usurper's blood;— thou wilt — thou shalt —" and, as if

by magic, at least so it seemed to Ferraro's dim and undefined perception, at the moment, Isabella produced the implements of writing. "Antoine," she continued, "as a son of Hungary, thou art bound to seize this opportunity of liberating thy country. There, write me thy promise to Piadena. The deed, thou wilt stipulate to execute is holy,—holy, sir, pious and honourable! and, being done, will make thee, wert thou more vile, and ranker, than the grave's mould, wholesome, and white like snow!"

Ferraro reached out his hand, to receive the requisite materials.

"That's well," proceeded Isabella; "but, love, thou canst not hold the pen; I'll guide thy hand for thee." Thus speaking, her soft palm closed on his hand, which felt to the touch, like red-hot coal. "So, so———."

Ferraro's corporeal faculties were, by this time, utterly overpowered, and, in the feverish and inebriated condition of his mind, the infamy of adopting the bravo's trade, was wholly lost sight of, or became complicated with more agreeable contemplations,— the possession of Czerina, and the vindication of the imaginary injuries of his country. Under these circumstances, it will scarcely excite surprise, that Isabella's arts and inducements, finally broke through the feeble barriers of his reeling reason; but it is due to Ferraro to observe, it was only, after all, by using a species of compulsion, by aiding his trembling hand, to scrawl the few lines, she dictated for him, that she succeeded in her iniquitous design.

However brief the *verba scripta*, which, by such obnoxious means, she managed to extort, owing to peculiar circumstances, the nature of which the reader will easily infer, from what has been already stated, their manufacture occupied a considerable time. The night fled fast; it wanted little more than a quarter to that "witching hour," in which Ferraro was engaged, to wait upon the imperial general.

Up to a certain point, ere yet a man hath exceeded the measure, prescribed by the Greek proverb,* he may, without difficulty, restrict himself in his offerings to *Liber Pater;* but let him only pass the half-way house, between sobriety and vinolency, and he will find his inclination to "drink deep," rapidly increase upon him, somewhat in the ratio, that his capacity of endurance fails him. Whether the power, who takes the juice of the poppy under his especial auspices, be Morpheus, or Bacchus, or, as Statius insinuates, Ceres,† I am sure I know not, nor, probably, did Ferraro, though he sacrificed to the deity's honour, in bumpers, which far outnumbered the libations of the epigrammatist of old, to the god of slumber.‡ The consequence was not at all an exception to the general rule, in such cases. Just as the wretched youth subscribed the fatal paper, with his signature, Isabella administered another crowned cup. The trepidation which shook him was so violent, that he stood in need of her offices, to raise it to his lips;— he tasted;— drank off the contents,—ay, to the dregs, and, as he did so, having passed through all the successive phases of inebriation, the lids of his eyes fell, and he rolled heavily off his seat, upon the carpet,— feverish, unmanned,— a helpless, senseless clod of earth.

Here we would observe, par parenthèse, that the hackneyed aphorism of Terence, touching the dependence of Venus upon Ceres and the god of wine, is hardly borne out by the fact. Whatever may be offered in favour of the daughter of Saturn, (provided Diodorus Siculus be in

* Ἢ πέντε πίν', η τρία πίν', ἢ μὴ τέτταρα.

† Si quis invisum Cereri benignæ
Me putat germen, vehementer errat;
Illa me in partem recipit libenter,
Fertilis agri.—*Statius.*

‡ See Martial, lib. i. epig. 72. Eubulus, in Athenæus, limits the wise man to three glasses.

the right, in gifting Lyæus, and not the lady, with the province of the barley field and the hop yard,) at all events, the queen of love owes little to the generous god, who, however he may incite to action over the bottle, is apt to " equivocate with a man,"* leaving him sometimes sadly in the lurch, when he comes to transfer his worship to a softer shrine. Thus, it proved with Ferraro, whose state of insensibility suggested our observation. For a moment, Isabella stood beside him, in undissembled triumph. She might have exclaimed, in the words of the Moorish prince, when he bestrode his prostrate conqueror, " Crown me, shadow me with laurels, ye spirits who delight in just revenge." Removing the writing out of his relaxed hold, she deposited it in her bosom,—at that moment the cathedral clock tolled the hour of midnight. Heavily sounded forth the solemn peal, on the fitful breezes of the night. Isabella started as the vibration caught her ear, but the very next instant her eye lighted up, with fiendish exultation, and her lip curved with an anomalous expression, such as an illustrator of Milton's Pandæmonium, would be glad to transfer to his canvass, to deepen the horror of that multitudinous array of hellish countenances, by the introduction of a single contrast, more horrible than all,..the smile of a fallen angel!

" I must be stirring, lest I be too late," murmured Isabella to herself.

At that moment, a peal of thunder rolled over the city. The royal dame threw open the casement, and looked abroad on the horrors of the night. " Is it the deed—ye elements?" she said. " Is this your tone of wrath? The spirit of the tempest on the darkness, doth write, in characters of living fire — REVENGE! Were I now superstitious, or cared for omens, such an hour, and such a night, might well deter me; but my soul is fixed—fixed

* Macbeth, Act ii. Scene 3.

as the key-stone of creation, and so is its own omen,—then let the elements rage!"

With the stupefaction of Ferraro, the legitimate interest of this scene, is at an end; we, therefore, lay by our *styli officium** for some fifteen or twenty minutes, after which, we request the gentle reader will favour us, with his company across the square, since the course of our zig-zag narrative wanders, for a few moments, to a large stone structure, where, by the way, we made a call on the Marquis of Piadena, in the beginning of the current manuscript.

The city was wrapt in darkness, excepting, when, at intervals, a shifting gleam of moonlight would glance, like a visiting spectre, on some steep and narrow gable, and the heavens seemed to let loose the flood-gates of their wrath, into a single heavy compact shower, when a private door of the palace gardens opened, and a figure, muffled in a light military cloak, but nothing like so closely enveloped, as the inclemency of the weather demanded, issued, stealthily, forth, and wading with difficulty to the grand square, asked, at the mansion we mentioned, to speak with the imperial general.

The person we speak of, stood, at the moment of preferring this request, at the threshold of a wide gateway, that, built between two pieces of masonry, gave entrance to the building. The officer on duty, to whom the application was made, was stationed at some paces within the porch, and beyond was a sort of lamp, that diffused but a feeble light, burning upon a pedestal. The dress of the speaker bespoke the man of rank, but it evidently afforded inadequate protection against the weather. The folds of the dripping cloak, being flung across his shoulder, discovered the rich embroidered garments underneath, not very accurately adjusted, and, at present, soiled with mud and rain. His Spanish hat, richly

* Boethius.

looped with pearls, a piece of coxcombry much affected at the period by the cavaliers of the Austrian court, was slouched low over the forehead, and, to complete the mysterious tout-ensemble of our portraiture, the individual in question was masked.

"Why, now, if this be not a good joke," replied the janitor, after fixing, for more than a minute, an earnest gaze of scrutiny on the applicant; "and you think, I don't know who you are?"

He in the mask started.

"Come, off with your vizor, and tell me what mad mummery is this? Thinkest thou, that that hose, purfled with silver, and the orthodox cut of that *pourpoint*, slashed out so exquisitely, and so trimly surmounted with that Spanish *cuello* of thine, can be overlooked?— or that the quaint device of those braided pantofles, once beheld, is ever to be forgotten? Is it not a folly now for a man to go masked, and yet rig himself, with such tell-tale tags, as thou hast about thee? What, though thou reekest with rain-water, I'd swear to thy raiment, and know thee among a thousand — Marc Antoine Ferraro."

"Then prithee bear my message to the Marquis of Piadena," said the other, in a low and uncertain voice.

"There, thou strivest hard to disguise thy familiar accents, as thou hast thy face; but it wont do — you are discovered — master secretary, you are discovered."

"If it be so, hie thee to our lord, and tell him I wait — I am here by appointment."

"That alters the case," replied the officer; "and now I remember me, I understood as much; but why not go at once yourself? — you will find him in his chamber."

"No, what I have to say must be spoken in this place; my minutes, at present are numbered — I have business on hand. You see, I am masked."

"I am not blind," returned the officer; "but are

you mad, that you expect his excellency will wait upon you here;—but have your way."

"Stay!" exclaimed the stranger, as the officer was retiring. "Make my excuses to our lord, and tell him how I am situated; mention, moreover, that I have brought with me that written paper, we spoke off. If his excellence do not choose to come to me, he will, perhaps, transmit the receipt through you, who can bear him back this instrument." Saying these words, the masked individual drew from his vest a small paper, folded and sealed.

"Well, may I never be married, if thy brain be not touched, Ferraro!—I've conjectured as much many a time and oft, but now I am assured of it. This humour passes,—but 'tis our lord's affair, and none of mine."

With these words, delivered *sotto voce*, the officer withdrew, and the next minute tapped at the chamber-door of the imperial general.

"Enter!" exclaimed a commanding voice from within.

"Ha! 'tis past the hour assigned, and I thought it had been Ferraro," said the Marquis of Piadena, in a tone of disappointment, as, throwing himself back on his easy seat, the door reclosed on the person of his officer-in-waiting.

"Your lordship's secretary is now below," said this latter, and he proceeded to detail the particulars of his message.

"Hem!" ejaculated Castaldo, when he had concluded; "the dolt has come to, more easily than I expected — perhaps it were better thus. We can settle the when and where, another time. The boy shall have his way."

Thus saying, he drew towards him an ink-glass, and, extracting a sheet of paper from a portfolio, that lay convenient, traced a few lines thereupon, which he

signed and sealed.* Holding it out to the attendant, he bade him give the writing, into the hands of his secretary. The officer presently returned with the paper of Ferraro, and again quitted the chamber. Castaldo hastily broke open the wax, and read these words :

"To His Excellency the Marquis of Piadena.

" My lord, I offer myself a willing instrument to effect the salvation of Transylvania, and am ready to avenge the injuries and insults, which King Ferdinand hath received, in the blood of his arch-enemy. At whatever time your excellency shall please to appoint,—Cardinal Martinuzzi meets his death by the hand of your faithful secretary, MARC ANTOINE PERENY."

" Pereny !" soliloquised Castaldo, in a voice of astonishment. " How, and when did the infatuated fool ascertain his parentage ? I guessed it, from the moment, I learned from the Cygani, that Scipio, with whom he so much consorteth, and Peter Pereny were one and the same. Besides, his likeness to that false woman, troubled me from the first, and, therefore, would I have him do this deed. And, doth he know the country of his birth, and yet consents ? — By my coronet, 'tis exquisite vengeance ! The all-powerful Pereny shall fall unwept, unknown, unhonoured; and his offspring, by her, whom, in the grave I hate, as only those, whose detestation is engendered in disappointed love, can hate — his offspring shall work my own, and Ferdinand's politic ends, to be requited with —— the headsman's axe."

* The warrant, or rather order, for the assassination of Martinuzzi, is still extant. It is signed Piadena, and directed to the following conspirators, viz. : Marc Antoine Ferraro, Sforza Pelavicini, Campagio Monina, Piacintino, Scaramoncia, and Don Lopez. Superstition failed not afterwards to remark, that, as happened to the murderers of Cæsar, not one of the above escaped an untimely and bloody end.

## MANUSCRIPT XXIX.

"Hot shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And, like a beaten hound, tremble thou shalt, as now."

ADONAIS.

"They hatch cockatrice's eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper."

ISAIAH.

MATTERS were thus situated, when there rode, one morning, into Hermanstadt, a chieftain of distinguished carriage, at the head of a band of gallant horsemen, all admirably equipped in burnished armour. It was in the course of the same day, that this stranger was left waiting, during a few minutes, in the vestibule of the citadel of Hermanstadt. Allowing for some slight touches of Time's effacing fingers on the lineaments of the man's countenance, and that age had lodged his *avant couriers* of silver, more thickly, amid the dark, close-curled locks, of his noble head, this individual neither betrayed, in feature nor form, any decay of strength, since our description of his general appearance, in an earlier volume. His step and gesture were as light, and his eyes beamed as brightly now, as they did a dozen years before.

We introduce to our readers, after an absence of many manuscripts, Peter, Count Pereny, who, having demanded an audience, found himself presently ushered into the

regent's presence-chamber, —the same magnificent apartment, described in a former manuscript. Martinuzzi was seated before a table, covered with several state papers. There also lay open a parchment-covered illuminated tome, containing some of the orthodox writings of the primate of Egypt,* whose unpremeditated style he admired, and whose genius and character, in other respects, bore no faint similitude to his own. He slightly changed colour on Pereny's entrance, but quickly recovered his outward composure, as the graf, with a haughty and formal inclination, took the seat, to which he had been pointed. The room was cleared, the attendants had withdrawn, and these two celebrated men remained, for some minutes, in thoughtful silence; both with reserved mien, and somewhat pale and anxious countenances, but both stern and collected. The sweet and painful memories of almost half a century were theirs in common, and here they sat, after near a life of mysterious communications, and reciprocal reserves, preparatory to a mutual and final understanding.

"Your eminence was prepared for this visit," began Pereny.

"I am glad you're come," returned Martinuzzi; adding, internally, "Shall I not die for that?" Then, more audibly, he proceeded, "Am I, at last, to congratulate you, my lord, on the resumption of your rank and station, in Hungary?"

"That must depend upon circumstances, your eminence," replied Pereny. "It is certain, that I have this day cast off for ever the veil of mystery, which for long hath wrapt about me, like a shroud; but, whether my doing so be a subject for your gratulation, I shall be better assured of, before we separate. In any case, I know what I owe myself, and what my country, and will not be made the tool of thy ambition. If, therefore, you

* St. Athanasius.

still dream, that I, Peter Pereny, was born to be the puppet, to serve the ends of any man, and then to be cast off as something valueless, you err egregiously; — the blood of a hundred ancestors forbids such dishonour. — Nay, hear me out; I know you deem the fabric of your power impregnable; but have a care, — do not push aside the scaffolding, lest the superstructure totter at its foundations."

"Do you threaten, sir?" said Martinuzzi.

"No, my lord," replied Pereny; "I only say thus much to put you on your guard; the ground, you stand upon, fails from under your feet; one false step—but have a care."

For an instant, there was a hectic on Martinuzzi's cheek; — it passed away. "And have I been your saviour for this?" he demanded, with some warmth; — "have I, for so many years, preserved you, from the Cygani's threatened steel, by communicating with him myself, in the guise of Father Dominick, and thus precluding the possibility of his conjecturing, that your lordship's person was concealed, beneath the monk's habiliments? — have I stooped, to connive at certain infamous devices, lowered my otherwise unsullied office, and stained my fair name, by making it the shield of Father Dominick's reputed practices? — Is this your gratitude, my lord, now that, at length, your fears for your life are past? Are reproaches my only thanks? and threats to be my recompense?"

"And have you nothing to be thankful for in turn? Consider," said Pereny.

"Perhaps I may have," said Martinuzzi; "but the subject is distressing, — the spirit of Beatrice hath only lately sought a happier sphere; for her, indeed, a blessed change, but the wound in my bosom is too recent, my lord; the allusion agonizes me."

There was a long pause, ere Pereny made answer. "I would not causelessly grieve your eminence," he

said, " but the time has at length arrived, when it is indispensable we should confer, without reserve; — I have much to say, that cannot be delivered so well hereafter. Hear me, and you will have cause to be thankful, that I have not deferred my communication, till too late."

" You can speak forward," said Martinuzzi, with a slight inclination of the head.

" My lord," said Pereny, after a short pause, " 'tis now many years since I first made proposals, for the hand of King John's sister."

Traces, as if distressing and touching images, rose on his memory, passed, like a cloud, across the countenance of Martinuzzi, but he spoke not.

" Circumstances, at that time, broke off the purposed union. I afterwards married, as you know, in Vienna, the mother of Marc Antoine. On her decease, I quitted Austria, repaired to Hermanstadt, and again sought the honour of the Princess Beatrice's alliance."

" Surely, my lord, this preamble might be spared me," said Martinuzzi.

" I see not how," returned Pereny; " the union I solicited came recommended to the princess, by Queen Isabella's earnest sanction. She prevailed upon the Turkish minister, to give it his authoritative approval. Solyman was appealed to — his will was promulged in favour of the match; and, I need not tell your highness, that, at that time, in Hungary, the sultan's will was law."

" It was not long so after; I rectified that error at least," said Martinuzzi proudly; " and, however they may submit in Vienna, the crosses of Septem Castra* are undefiled by the presence of the crescent. † But prithee, go

* Septem Castra; Transylvania.

† The inhabitants of Christian lands, under Turkish domination, were wont to acknowledge the Mahommedan power, without compromising their religion, by lunating a cross with a half-moon over the churches, after this manner :— The steeples of the cathedral of St. Stephen at Vienna,

on, my lord, if, indeed, it is requisite that my nerves be thus anatomized."

"Things were situated as I have stated," proceeded Pereny, "when, one day, you called me aside, and —"

"I did," broke in Martinuzzi, with some heat; "and I little thought, after such services — (and, since you urge me thus far, my lord, let me call to your remembrance, my long and zealous care of Maximilian) — I little thought, I say, that at this time of day, you would rip up the matter of that communication; but, since you will have it so, I will recapitulate those denotements I then confided to your honour. I told you, that, brought up under her mother's roof, the Princess Beatrice and myself had conceived, in earliest youth, a reciprocal attachment, and that, while yet children in the eye of the law, our fates were irrevocably woven together. Two persons were present, at those holy rites of love and marriage, Luke Swartz and his sister Alicia; in either of whose keeping, I thought, I might safely entrust my dearest interests. It happened, I was mistaken; — of Swartz no more, — but his unhappy sister, as I afterwards learned, betrayed our union to the Countess Scæpas.

"The rage of Beatrice's mother, at hearing that her daughter had thrown herself away, on so friendless a being, as I was at that time, and her consequent tyrannous proceedings, I will not repeat to you at large. I explained, then, the nature of those unholy machinations, of that unintermitted course of overbearing persecution, by the operation of which the countess finally prevailed, on the, not naturally strong, mind of Beatrice, to break off our intercourse. Bending the whole strength of her powerful genius to the accomplishment of this one darling object,—armed with the two-edged sword of a parent's

were for centuries, surmounted with a cross and star, Solyman having engaged, at the siege of that city in 1529, in reverence of such holy symbols, to spare the edifice. — See Brown's Travels in Dacia, Styria, &c. London. 4to. 1688.

power, and almost regal authority,—both of us conscious that our marriage was illegal, on account of our nonage, and therefore liable to be set aside, by ecclesiastical judicature,—what wonder, thus beset with every species of dire machinery, that Beatrice's determination at length gave way, under such accumulated pressure, or that I, out of very love to her, could no longer withstand or elude her mother's stern, and relentless will? What wonder, that all the earthly hopes and happiness of two young, and, I may truly add, my lord, two guileless, unsophisticated human beings, should be immolated, to appease the insatiate maw of the moloch of family pride and aggrandizement? Enough,—I resolved upon the sacrifice, and fled in despair to the monastery of Erdium, where, in no long time, my monastic vows seemed to place a perpetual bar, between me and my beloved. But the means employed, to wrench from the princess her consent, to our separation, stunned for ever the buoyancy of her youth, and undermined her reason,—she pined in thought, and lay for many months, with an oppressive weight upon her spirits,—a morbid sense of being deserted and left desolate; from which state of hypochondriasis she only partially recovered, on my rejoining her, and her brother in Poland.

"The countess was then no more. These circumstances I detailed to you at large. I threw myself upon your honour, and implored you not to press your suit,—you met my disclosure by a proposition, which was unexpected, and which I own startled me not a little. You wished to stipulate, that your late son, my nephew Maximilian, should wed the Lady Czerina, on her attaining the age, at which, according to King John's will, I was to resign the sceptre to her rule. To this, I replied at once, that if Maximilian should turn out worthy of her highness's hand, and there was no objection on her part, I would prove no obstacle to the union. Thus the matter rested, when you,

my lord, in company with the princess, set forth for Buda. Why need we say more? Why recall our preconcerted attack upon your retinue, in the forest of Belivar, and its disastrous consequence? Why are my feelings to be harrowed up, by the remembrance of that flesh wound, from a chance shot, which, together with her fright, unsettled for ever the intellects of Beatrice? Whether in the Cygani's cave, tended, by the Gipsy Unna, or within these walls, by some of her people, the existence of that persecuted lady was, then ceforth, as you know, a blank;—and now," concluded Martinuzzi, "that, like some evil genius, you have uplifted the gravestone from my heart, by invoking these bitter recollections, like spectres to scare and madden me, what is to be? To what purpose our conference?—say, my lord, and let's have done with this,—I am not well. Is there aught else?"

"Much," returned Pereny, with considerable solemnity of manner,—"And first, of Maximilian. I grant, his dissolute proceedings formed some excuse for your annulling our contract, in his regard. Such vain and idle conduct, as he exhibited, was unworthy the high blood of Pereny,—but the boy is dead,—murdered,—let his earth be sacred. I cannot blame you," resumed the magnat, after a pause given to natural emotion, "wishing to evite such a match for the Lady Czerina. I saw your scruples were not ill-founded, and therefore proposed to substitute Marc Antoine, in the place of Maximilian."

"And I," answered Martinuzzi, "as in the instance of my nephew, qualified my acceptance of your offer. But Marc Antoine, still less than his elder brother, merits the hand of Czerina. Our compact is clearly void."

"What!" exclaimed Pereny, "is she not the object of the foolish boy's idolatry? the pivot, on which his all of happiness turns—and more, is not his passion reciprocated?"

"I hope to God, not," said Martinuzzi, in an impressive voice.

"You hope not—why so, in the name of Heaven?" demanded Pereny, hotly.

"Because," replied the regent, with great calmness, "it is my fixed determination, that Marc Antoine, your son, my lord, shall never wed the queen of Hungary."

Pereny started up, took two rapid turns across the apartment, resumed his seat, and said, with the hasty articulation of a deeply offended person—"your reasons? your reasons, my lord?"

"I explained my reasons yesterday," replied Martinuzzi, "the plain unvarnished fact of his cohabiting with Isabella, while he pretends to her daughter's hand, will surely justify my refusal. The character of Maximilian owned many redeeming points,—what I think of your younger son, I should be sorry to say in your lordship's hearing. Let it suffice, he weds not Czerina."

"Not whilst it suits your ambitious ends to unite her to —— to the Richter Iwan," said Pereny, indignantly; "for this, I blow away to the opposite winds of heaven, all further forbearance and respect, all moderation, which for years hath been my daily use, but which were now a mockery of the holy cause of truth, and justice. My lord cardinal, I was shut up for two hours last night, in the dungeon of Hubert Vicchy." Pereny paused, and fixed a stern eye, on Martinuzzi, whose countenance, either through anger, or some deeper passion, grew deadly pale, but he made no reply.

"What need of words," resumed Pereny; "there is an intelligence, between soul and soul, far more rapid, and less deceptive. You know, already, those denotements, I have to make."

"Nevertheless," observed Martinuzzi, with forced composure, "I'll borrow patience, a little time, to listen to these insults."

"Then understand, my lord cardinal," said Pereny, "that I know, and have been cognizant of the fact for

years, that Czerina, the reputed heiress of these dominions, is not the daughter of King John and Isabella."

He paused. His eyes, and those of Martinuzzi, met—the regent turned paler than before.

"She is not the child of John of Zapola," continued Pereny, "but of his sister Beatrice; and, notwithstanding the rigid vows of his order, Cardinal Martinuzzi is her father."

"And you have known this for years?" said Martinuzzi, with strange calmness.

"That you were Lady Czerina's father, I heard, long before I offered my hand to the Princess Beatrice; and you yourself, by mentioning your private marriage, sufficiently indicated, who was her mother. Think you, that the interview in the vaults of Hermanstadt, between that lady and her child, which, in hopes of awakening the princess, from her torpid and despondent condition, the gipsy, Unna, so cleverly planned, and accomplished, —think you, it must not have awakened my suspicions, had I not, previously, been acquainted with all the circumstances? I once beheld, by chance, the sentry, whose duty it was, to keep guard on the precipice, and recollected the man to be the same, who headed your Moldavians, in the affair of the forest of Belivar. I guessed, moreover, from some few words that, in the chateau of Count Rodna, passed between me and the Duke of Eissenburg, that he, the reputed agent in that matter, and the real leader, were, in fact, brothers. In the character of Scipio, in which alone I held communication with Unna, I once, when she was dubious, how to get the coffin of Czerina borne through the vaults, and passages, hinted at that circumstance. Upon this hint, she acted, by holding out the promise of information, touching his brother's fate;— a gipsy-maid allured the sentry into the vaults;— it might be gathered, from the man's confession, that, owing to the likeness of Czerina

to her mother, he mistook her, for the spectre of the Princess Beatrice, to whose supposed murder, in the forest of Belivar, he imagined himself accessary. Also, it appears, that the Cygani Alaric would, under the like delusion, and to answer some unknown, villanous project, have stabbed her to death. It was I, whom the villain sought, in those vaults; for, baffled by our common personation of Father Dominick, he came to suspect, that the victim, he hunted through the world, with such hot rancour, was disguised, in the garb of the African. I visited the chamber, where you had caused the sentry to be confined, in order, as I told you, to reassure myself, that he was the brother of Eissenburg. Some weeks after, Luke Swartz, by your orders, aided the escape of Albert of Eissenburg, through the secret door of the dungeon, the carcase of one of the national troop, was discovered festering in the fossé, beyond the ramparts, having about his person that terrific writing, addressed to the citizens of Hermanstadt."

The brow of Martinuzzi was clouded, with a kind of forced humility. "Why call up these painful memories, my lord," he said. "You knew, at the time, that the corpse was that of one, who had fallen in quarrel with Alaric Polgar; and that the writing, with its signature, was inscribed by the Cygani, out of the very wantonness of his malignity. You, doubtless, remember I explained the matter to you, as I had it, from the mouth of the insolent villain, a few days subsequent to the discovery of the body."

"And wherefore, may I inquire, did you suffer that man to escape the arm of justice for so many years?" demanded Pereny.

The gloom of Martinuzzi's brow darkened, and he turned away his head.

"But your whole life is of a piece, my lord cardinal," continued the indignant noble; "for what reasons, think

you, do I enumerate these scandalous items of your policy? To exhibit the nature of that degrading and mysterious life, I stooped to endure so long. Have I not been as one apart, and alien from my kind?— foregoing the comforts of social life,— renouncing the honours and privileges of my rank,— practising unworthy delusions,— submitting to unheard of privations? And this, with only a single ray of hope, glimmering faintly, in the dark vista of futurity;—namely, that the sceptre of Hungary should, hereafter, be swayed by the race of Pereny. I will not survive the extinguishing of that ray," concluded the magnat, in a bolder and more energetic tone. "Nor do you dream, my lord, that Czerina, whose very existence slurs the character of a prince of the church, shall be let triumph in the downfall of my house."

"Indeed Pereny, you err," said Martinuzzi, after a pause. "In any event, my daughter is rightful heir;— what would you have?"

Pereny's countenance lighted up, with a bitter and scornful expression; he, however, returned no answer.

"Consider," proceeded Martinuzzi, in bland and persuasive accents, "the espousals of myself and the sister of King John were legal. The Lady Czerina is the issue of our union; and, although her birth occurred, long subsequent to my taking the ecclesiastical vows, you well know, that the ordinance of St. Stephen,* permitting priests to marry, though seldom cited, has never been abrogated; it was ratified in that celebrated council, held by St. Ladislas at Sabloc,† and not long after by Colo-

* St. Stephen. This pious and enlightened lawgiver, was the Alfred the Great of Hungary. See his life, ab Episcopo Chartuitio conscripta, &c. a. L. Surio edita. To object to his political system, that it based the monarchy too entirely on the will of the privileged classes, to the exclusion of the Villani Jobagiones, were to view it by the light of the nineteenth century. The saint was not wise beyond his generation.— See Decreta St. Steph. ad Emeric Ducem, lib. ii.

† A.D. 1092.

man at Strigonie.* You are likewise aware of my influence at Rome, which, were I ever driven to acknowledge the facts of the case, would enable me to remedy all apparent illegality. You cannot be ignorant, that these territories, according to the gift of the pope, are already mine. Trust me, at the first hint of my wish, I could have the donative transferred to the daughter of the late princess Beatrice, to the niece of John of Zapola."

Still Pereny returned no answer, save a smile, slight indeed, and ambiguous, but significant, of deep and quiet exultation, and there appeared a conscious triumph, in the magnat's very silence, which meant more than met the eye, and, like the taciturn rebuke of the shade of Ajax, transcended all articulate expression. Gladly would Martinuzzi, despite his natural tact and sensibility, the *antennæ* of a tender conscience, have shunned interpreting that hushed eloquence. Pereny darted the light of his keen eye, full upon the countenance of the regent, as if to pierce into the depths of his soul; but, however he might inwardly wince, beneath the probing operation, not the working of a single muscle betrayed inquietude. The mutual silence lasted more than a minute. Martinuzzi resumed the conversation.

"What am I to infer, my lord," he said, "from your remaining mute?"

It was after a brief and painful pause, that Pereny made answer. "Thus much, your eminence," he said, with stern emphasis; "that if you seek the transfer of that grant, you boast of, you will risk your fair name and reputation to little purpose. "The Lady Czerina shall never reign in Hungary, unless she share her regal power, with Marc Antoine Pereny; such is my fixed resolve. You had better look to it in time."

"This is too insolent, my lord Pereny," returned Mar-

* See Decretum Colomanni Reg. Nep. Belæ in Oper. Tripartit.

tinuzzi, and dangerous fire shot from his eyes, as he spoke. "Beware, that thou urgest me not too far. I can licence much at your hands, considering our relations, for so many years, but there is a limit to my forbearance. My blood is somewhat unruly, and I cannot, at all times, answer for myself; so please to put a rein upon these intemperate sallies — do you hear,—I'm not apt to endure further."

"My lord cardinal, do you adopt this tone with me?" hotly demanded Pereny, his blood rushing into his face.

"Ay! by my soul! do I," replied Martinuzzi, in a voice, that shook the chamber where they sat,—"with you?—with any man, who forgets the respect, due to our sacred office. Curb your insolence of speech,—I have told you it offends me."

"This is beyond belief!" exclaimed the equally proud noble. "Have you grown mad?"

"Another word, Pereny, in that tone of defiance," cried Martinuzzi, with greater mastery over himself, and speaking in a firmer, and more concentrated voice,—"another word, I call my guards, and have you arrested on the spot."

"And for what do you take me, sir?" returned Pereny, calmly, and with no little dignity of manner. "I am no more fool than coward, nor have thrust my head into the lion's den, without being provided with a sufficient surety. I trench my life about in triple steel, by involving its safety in your own,—your own—nay, possibly, in that of Czerina; and, also, in what, if I greatly err not, you are even more chary of than either, your fame,— your fair fame, lord cardinal."

Martinuzzi made no immediate reply, but sat for many minutes, apparently absorbed, in some deep and anxious mental argument. Whatever was the subject of his internal debate, its importance might be partly gathered from the evident intensity of his abstraction. He

seemed to have forgot himself to marble—not a sense and faculty, but was occupied, with the world within, and all perception of the material, and palpable objects around, became for the time obscured.

Pereny likewise continued silent, and looked on, half-awed, like one, seeking to penetrate the mystery of that last unmoved slumber, where the passions, errors, and sorrows of a life, lie "hushed into depths beyond the watcher's diving." Fixed, and instinct with an expression, not unallied to melancholy, was the spelled gaze of Pereny, upon the pale and accurately chisseled features of Martinuzzi, and never was there a face, which more impressively combined, in its main lineaments, the calm godlike stamp of some classic model, with the softer characteristics of human genius and sensibility. How seldom, among the common-place herd of living men and women, do we meet with a physiognomy, that might serve, from its sharp profile, and otherwise intellectual turn, for a specimen of the antique, and, apart from the factitious interest, with which association of idea unconsciously gifts such classic contour of countenance, it were still rarer to find it accompanied, with the more attractive characteristics of beautiful expression. But the countenance of Martinuzzi, eminently blended masculine beauty, with a rigid and marbly outline; and Pereny, as he kept his steadfast eye upon the cardinal, was conscious, though he hardly knew wherefore, of the peculiar interest, inseparable, from such harmonious union of opposite qualities. There was no small resemblance in some respects, though a striking dissimilitude in others, between the characters of these two men;—both were first-rate statesmen and excellent captains — both were ambitious, but the ambition of Martinuzzi was of a loftier kind, than that of Pereny, whose love of fame was comparatively feeble, and whose objects were mostly personal and selfish. Whatever abilities the magnat occasionally

displayed, his proceedings were far from discovering either conduct or firmness, while the pretensions of Martinuzzi were better sustained, by his mental qualities, natural and acquired. The native pre-eminence of hereditary rank, hardly balanced the ministerial honours of the regency, or the *prestige* of official sanctity, and Pereny's misfortune, in being destitute of that perseverance, necessary to surmount difficulties, naturally lost him somewhat of that influence, over the minds of his countrymen, which Martinuzzi, by inflexibly adhering to whatsoever he undertook, until, through whatever danger and discouragement, he conducted it to a happy issue, had succeeded in acquiring. But there was still another, and more marked feature, in the regent's character, which distinguished him, from his noble rival—it consisted in that melancholy, that acute sensibility, which has been pronounced* the painful inheritance of men of genius, but which, in the instance of Martinuzzi, owned, moreover, we are sorry to add, a less ennobling origin.

If, as Catholic divines affirm, the judgments we suffer in the flesh, tell, in mitigation of punishment in the spirit, what a mighty instalment must that man daily deposit, in the sinking-fund of his secret soul, towards the settlement of his great account, unto whom the bare idea of a slur, on the ermine of his reputation, were worse than death itself, should he, like Martinuzzi, be doomed, for years, to writhe with an exenteration of the inmost mind, lest a single *contre-tems* shiver to its foundations, the august, and apparently rock-rooted pedestal, his deeds and genius had erected to his fame.

At length, after a considerable pause of deep thought, Martinuzzi spoke :—

"You have indulged yourself, my lord, in such intemperate language," he said, in a hollow, yet more schooled

* Aristoteles quidem ait omnes ingeniosos melancholicos esse.—Cic. Tusc. quæst. i. 33.

voice, than he had before used, "that it would well become my state, not to bandy further terms with you; but there may be more in this, than meets the ear; and you have hinted, in obscure phrase, at matters that ——. In short, Pereny, is there any thing yet untold, that you would have me infer, from your mysterious and discourteous address? Prithee, be plain with me."

"I *will* be plain with you, lord cardinal; it is for that purpose I am here," replied Pereny.

"Yet, stay," said Martinuzzi, with sudden wildness; "are we alone, think you? Silence! What was it?"

"Air," replied Pereny.

"I hate the subject you are upon," rejoined the regent; "but now we are here, and for once, I'll listen. Well, what is it?"—The tones, in which he spoke, were half suffocated, and yet determined, as if he had screwed up his courage to hear the whole.

The eyes of Pereny rested with stern significance on Martinuzzi's face, for several seconds, and then, with grave air, drawing his seat nearer to that of his companion, he commenced, in a low, deep, but most articulate voice, as follows:—

"It is now many years since the late king sickened and died. Those factious nobles, young Maylat's father, and Balassi, confiding in the strength of their strongholds in this principality, had thrown off, like garments over-worn, their duty and allegiance. On hearing these tidings, his grace, who was then at Buda, followed his army to Transylvania. It may have been the fatigue of his hurried journey—it may have been aught else—enough—he died, as you know, in this very province where you now rule; in this city, and I believe——" Pereny abruptly stopped, and then with his eyes slowly made the revolution of the room.—"Yes, I am right," he added, after a moment's consideration, "even on this spot, where we now confer together, John of Zapola breathed his last."

The look of Martinuzzi did not quail; yet a shade of the rose hardly startled the lily on his cheek. For an instant it lasted, and no more. Ere it could be perceived, his complexion had returned to its previous monumental hue.

"He was your earliest benefactor," proceeded Pereny, turning full towards Martinuzzi, and looking at him in a very marked manner; "the fast friend of your youth, the advancer and patron of your maturer age; the man, that first lent a base to your colossal greatness;—to whose bountiful spirit, more liberal than the winds, the stars, the flowers, you owe all, that makes you mightier than men, more grateful, at least, if not more deserving. Swollen as thou art, lord cardinal, canst thou name the thing under heaven, that is precious to thy ambition, whether comprehended in the fruition of fame, or the possession of power, but was first built up in thee, by John of Zapola?"

Pereny ceased, as if for a reply, but Martinuzzi made no answer. His eyes were fixed on the floor, and he remained still and mute, and apparently as unmoved, and as indifferent to the gaze of Pereny, as a statue hewed out of marble, to which, rather than to a living being, his utter absorption and stirless attitude can be properly compared.

"In this apartment," went on Pereny, "his grace spent his last breath. I, amongst others, attended his death-bed."

Martinuzzi hastily, but *scarcely*, raised his looks from the ground; the movement would seem to originate in surprise, but it was at once so transient and uncertain, that it left behind a doubt, not only, as to what construction should be put upon it, but even whether it had, in reality, occurred.

"Luke Swartz likewise was present."

The brow of Martinuzzi worked; he *wholly* raised his eyes, and bent them inquisitively, on those of Pereny.

After a moment's survey, he dropped his gaze again upon the floor. The magnat pursued the discourse.

" You may, perhaps, remember, my lord, that, at the time, queen Isabella was confined in childbed, I was absent from Buda, at my baronial castle, near Vissegrade. It was night, or rather, I should say, morning; for the turn was past,—within the week, I purposed returning to the capital, — when the drowsy household were aroused, by a violent knocking at the outer gate, and a single horseman demanded instant speech of me, in a case of extreme importance. The urgency of his manner was such, that he succeeded in obtaining admittance. I was awakened,—the unknown was ushered into my chamber. I received him in bed; he was wrapped from head to foot, in a long travelling cloak, but his calpac being off, I knew my visitor, the instant I set my eyes upon him; he was formerly the equerry of the Countess Scæpas;— Luke Swartz, my lord, was the man." The pause that followed was long and thoughtful, on both sides.— Pereny again spoke. " After some little previous parley, Swartz entered upon the important matter, that brought him to my castle. I will now deliver to your eminence the nature of his communication. — ' I have hasted, hither,' he said, addressing himself to me; ' to lay bare to your lordship, being a nobleman of the highest rank, and the greatest influence in Hungary, a monstrous, and unparalleled piece of treason, now consummating, against the king and people of these realms,—' he paused,— I signed to him to go on. He proceeded to inform me, that a lady of no small consequence about the court, he mentioned not her name, (and only subsequent events, years afterwards, enabled me to guess at it), was delivered of a female infant, a few hours antecedent, to Queen Isabella's giving a prince, to the house of Zapola. He told me, that the bishop of Waradin, was the father of this female; and that, by the skilful offices of the gipsy, Unna, who was the midwife, and of his own sister, Alicia,

it was contrived to substitute your illegitimate daughter, in place of King John's issue. Your progeny was palmed upon Isabella for the true heir, whilst the new-born babe was delivered by Unna, into the hands of Swartz. 'The child is already as one of the dead, observed the beldame, since only thou and thy sister, know of its existence. Let it be dealt upon, as you would, that I cause your suit to prosper.' Of the nature of the promise or threat, implied in these words, Swartz made no mention. The equerry added, that your eminence, in well-acted ignorance of these orders, had directed him to convey your child, with an explanatory letter, to our late friend, Count Rodna, the Scottish exile. 'Now,' said the equerry, in conclusion, 'I have come to the resolution to be advised by your lordship, what it behoves me to do, under circumstances of such danger and difficulty.'"

"The villain!" muttered Martinuzzi, under his breath, though, low as the words were spoken, they sounded distinct and audible, on the ears of Pereny.

"I cannot guess," said the magnat, "whom your eminence would stigmatize, with that epithet;—not Luke Swartz, surely,—he did no more than his duty; and, how a man of your sagacity and penetration, came to rely on his proving true to you, whilst false to his king and country, passes my divining."

"You will favour me, by sparing your remarks," said Martinuzzi, and he drew up his stately form to its full height. "My lord," he proceeded coldly, and in a voice, whose composed and deep organic tones, at such a moment, and after what had transpired, seemed almost preternatural; "you can go forward to the end, since I cannot choose, but hear the full of thy relation."

"I approach it, sir," replied Pereny; "it would be hard to conceive my excess of surprise, at what I heard,—it was really so extreme, that for the first few minutes afterwards, Swartz remained unanswered. At length, I found voice to ask, where he had left his infant charge?

—'Behold him here,' was the reply to my inquiry; and throwing aside the folds of his cloak, the royal babe was discovered, tranquilly sleeping, on the equerry's arm. There was an eloquence, in the very helplessness of his innocence, that pleaded well, for the son of John of Zapola; and I was not long in making up my mind, to bear him to his father. As I knew, that every thing depended upon celerity, what I determined to do, that I commenced putting into execution, within the same hour. In the course of the next, I was on the road to Hermanstadt. Several days elapsed, ere we reached this city, where the tidings, with which we were greeted, overwhelmed us with dismay and chagrin. King John, it appeared, had been at the point of death, for the last two preceding days, and was certainly not expected to survive the night. I succeeded in obtaining a private interview with his grace, in the course of which, I explained every particular. Never shall I forget the horror, depicted on his dying features, at my intelligence. Three or four days had elapsed since, by means of extraordinary despatches, he had learned his queen's accouchement; and even in the interval, between hearing these tidings and our arrival, he had executed, and transmitted to Buda, that testament, which appointed you the guardian of his infant princess, and joint regent with Isabella. I was struck speechless with consternation at such a state of things; whilst John, in feeble accents, demanded to see his child. Luke Swartz was introduced through that door, with the infant under his cloak. Never did a more lovely and promising babe exist. He was held before his royal sire, who, perceiving a deep mulberry mark on his left shoulder, bade us both note it well. Then, after some preliminary observations, almost unintelligible, by reason of the broken and faltering speech, in which they were delivered, touching the danger, that must accrue to his child's life, from such vast power and talents, put into motion, by your consummate ambition, were you made acquainted with

Swartz's betrayal of your treason,—he caused us both solemnly to swear, never to divulge to the world the least particular, connected with his own wrongs, and the existence of his son, until subsequent to the death of Martinuzzi, or, at all events, not before Sigismund was of an age to govern; nor then, unless, in the opinion of both, there should appear a reasonable prospect of his succeeding, in establishing his claims. Apprehensive, that it might be needed, I had the precaution to bring with me, to Hermanstadt, the diadem of St. Stephen, and King John, after, with difficulty, writing a few sentences, in relation to the mulberry token on his shoulder, ratified them with his seal and signature. He caused this to be witnessed by Luke Swartz and myself, and posited within the lining, or inner pad of the sacred coronet; and again, having bound us both, by the most solemn oath, not to reveal to Sigismund the secret of his birth, till your eminence's death, or occasion favoured the discovery, the injured king of Hungary went to sleep with his fathers. The infant was conveyed by Swartz, the next day, according to your first directions, to the chateau of Count Rodna, near Coloswar; and from that moment until this, not a single syllable have I ever hinted at, to a living soul, in respect to this mysterious transaction. I have done; I have at length spoken out, that you may understand, how I am armed against you, in case you dare the quarrel."

The musing and painful break to their discourse, which followed, lasted several minutes. We will not attempt to depict, since it would be a vain endeavour, the state of Martinuzzi's mind, during the foregoing exposé. Even his all-powerful and ever active faculties, fertile as they were in expedients, seemed stunned for awhile, to reflect, that, for years, his treasured secret had been in the keeping of the haughty graf, — that Pereny, from whom, of all men living, he would most have hidden such debasing transactions, had all along been privy to, what he

believed, his treason; he was, however, far too proud to enter upon a syllable of justification,—he disdained the notion. What! could he descend to make appeal, as to the scales of a balance, casting the charges, to which he had listened, into one scale, and whatever mitigating circumstances were in his power to allege, in extenuation of his conduct, into the other? No; his towering and impatient spirit scorned to have to refute the foul aspersions of Pereny, and could ill endure being put upon its defence. He had "drank poison," as the graf continued to speak, and, for some minutes after his arraigner ceased, he preserved a haughty silence.

Pereny was the first to resume the topic—"You see my lord, how matters stand," he began: "it is idle to seek to throw dirt in my eyes, by telling me these provinces are yours, by a bull of his holiness, and that at a word, you could get the gift transferred to Czerina, whoever may be the rightful heir. I neither doubt your influence at Rome, nor your capacity to uphold Czerina on her throne; but the question between us lies far deeper. I know well, that not for all the territory of earth, would you have this matter made public; — it is not, whether I can prevent your daughter swaying the kingdoms of Hungary and Transylvania, but whether I have it not in my power, to strike a blow at that high character, which, to gain the whole world, you would not willingly forfeit,—that is the real point at issue; nor will I do your eminence's penetration so much wrong, as, on that point, to add one syllable more. Suffice it,—will you stop, my 'making you an astonishment, and a hissing to the nations round about,' at the easy price of the union of Antoine and Czerina."

Martinuzzi breathed heavily, ere he made answer, in a decisive tone, "I meant you, sir, to read your check in my silence. Let me repeat, however, that with my knowledge and consent, the Lady Czerina shall never wed a

villain, and such I esteem the man, you have named." The quiet solemnity, with which these words were uttered, was expressive of a rooted resolution.

Pereny rose from his seat, with kindling eye and determined gesture—" Enough, sir," he said, " we understand each other.—My course is clear; I will lay the matter before the assembled states of Hungary, and to embitter the sense, and aggravate the shame of a foreign and usurped rule, I will recount to them, the infamous exploit of him, whose lawless brow, the perpetual zone of regal foreheads, descends, at last, to clasp; the breathing of the universal wind, the very birds of the air shall carry the matter of Martinuzzi's shame, even to those remotest regions (if any be,) which never heard the tale of Martinuzzi's glory." Pereny paused; his hearer closed his eyes and shuddered.—" I will uplift the curtain, before the astonished world," concluded the magnat. " In place of thy specious virtues, all Hungary, throughout its length and breadth, shall know thee for what thou art,—and as many market-crosses, as are in the land, shall hear the common crier proclaim thee, traitor."

Martinuzzi started up. There was writ, in the bloodless and haggard calmness of his countenance, an ominous something, too fearful to interpret. Echo answered not sound, more faithfully, than the picture Pereny had drawn, was responsive to his restless, and feverish forebodings. It gave body and voice to the terrors, which, in the solitude of his heart, for many years, had haunted his nightly visions and daily meditations, like a spectre. He hurriedly motioned his hand towards his companion, and for some seconds he essayed to speak, but something within struck dumb his voice. " Nay, nay, Pereny," he at length faltered out, " perhaps we may otherwise settle this difference—besides, your oath—your oath to King John, on his death bed."

" What means your eminence?" demanded Pereny.

" Did you not tell me, you promised not to make this revelation, during my lifetime?"

" That was in case Sigismund had not otherwise a reasonable prospect of establishing his rights," returned Pereny.

" Well, my lord, what prospect can he have?—a fugitive, and also (which no one can lament more sincerely, than I have done,) of unsound mind."

" Perish your eminence's secret boast!" replied the noble, scornfully. " Despair the vain assumption,— be assured, 'tis false!"

" False?" faintly repeated Martinuzzi.

" False as thyself, misproud prelate!" rejoined Pereny; " for, since it must be, learn, the unfriended, feeble-minded Sigismund, whom thou hast so irreparably injured, is no other, than the redoubtable Richter, Vilez Iwan, the conqueror at Coloswar."

Martinuzzi sank down upon the seat, he had that moment quitted; and for the next few moments, covered his face with both his hands. " I should have dreamed of this before," he murmured indistinctly from his hueless lip; whilst all the vast and collateral consequences, involved in the information, flowed indistinctly on his brain, like the thousand waves of a troubled sea.

" Learn further," proceeded Pereny, " the Richter Iwan is now on his march to Hermanstadt, to claim the throne of his ancestors. Within these four-and-twenty hours, I expect, he will summon the city to surrender."

Martinuzzi altered not his position.

" My lord, I take my leave," presently said Pereny, advancing towards the door: " and since this misunderstanding cannot be otherwise adjusted —" he paused, for Martinuzzi was already upon his feet, and stood between him, and the point of egress.

" What's that you say, Pereny?" he demanded wildly. " You'll not adjust our disagreement? Ha! think bet-

ter of it;— perchance, my lord," he added with a livid lip, whilst a shade of portentous feeling darkened his brow, like a thunder-cloud, and some deep mysterious meaning, that defied expression, seemed to lurk in the more low and indrawn voice, in which he couched the menace; "*perchance it were wiser of you*——."

"Wiser of your eminence, you should say," replied the noble. "Yet reconsider, lest, when your more prudent moments visit you, you have cause to repent your present precipitance, on finding it impede the march of your true interest."

"That shall not be, I swear," exclaimed Martinuzzi, fiercely. "Then say, what would you?"

"Marry Antoine Pereny to the Lady Czerina," said the noble.

"Nor shall that be, either," rejoined the regent, haughtily.

"Then only this remains," said Pereny. "I have already spoken with Eissenburg; and shall, immediately, open a correspondence with Iwan. If, ere to-morrow noon, I receive not a favourable message from you, I shall, at that hour, repair to the palace, and instruct Queen Isabella, who is the true heir of John of Zapola, together with every other particular, relating to your reaching machinations. You have my last word;— let me pass, my lord?"

"What, ho! my guards there!" shouted Martinuzzi, moving a stop towards the door.

Something like a smile lit up the proud brow of Pereny. "You would seek to confine me in vain, my lord," he observed calmly: "there's not a single prison, in this keep, whose secret mode of egress I am not acquainted with."

"I will have you chained hand and foot, Pereny, fettered in every limb, but I will keep you," cried Martinuzzi, in a voice of irrepressible wrath.

"I apprehended your kind intentions," returned Pereny,

with provoking composure, "and have not entered these walls a solitary individual; there are those without, to whom the labyrinth of the vaults are no secret, and who will know how to act, in case I am not forthcoming."

"I will have a whole corps quartered in your dungeon, arrogant noble, but you shall be secured!" exclaimed Martinuzzi, with vehemence. "What, ho! without there!"

"My lord," returned Pereny, with a sneer, "your might and malice are alike impotent; but severed snakes will writhe, until they die,—it is their destiny. Think not, I would be slow, in acquainting my guard, unto whom they really owe allegiance. Why, what a contemptuous opinion must you have of me, to hold this language! The confession of Alicia, which Eissenburg received back from Swartz, at Coloswar, is now in the possession of one of my people. Think you, that my imprisonment will hinder its being given to the world? Rather will it accelerate the hour, that lays open that evidence of your treason."

"I know not why, I forbear poignarding you where you stand!" cried Martinuzzi.

"'Twere a crowning deed, and, methinks, were your eminence's wisest course," returned Pereny, scornfully.

At this moment, a party of men-at-arms appeared at the door. The regent looked at them, vacantly, for an instant. "You are not wanted," he said, at last, when emotion permitted speech; and the room was again cleared.

"*My wisest course, you say*," repeated Martinuzzi, with a voice ghastly and hollow, sounding as if sunk within him, and quivering with some deep emotion, from limb to limb: "*So—not unlikely!*" then, after seeming to ruminate for an instant, he went on; "but any where, but here,—not under this roof. Fiend! Devil!" he cried, suddenly altering his tone, to one sharpened by

passion, and partial insanity. "What a thought thou hast conjured! Thou hast put fire into my brain, and blood into my eyes. Whatever things I deem, or look upon, blush like a hell. Ha! that gash!—'tis thine!—ay, thine! Well mayst thou shudder, when reeking forms are round,—but thou thyself!—God,—man! thou look'st a corpse more crimson than the rest! —Forbear me."

"I shall look to hear from your eminence, ere noon to-morrow," said Pereny, sullenly; and quickly passing his reverend companion, as he spoke, in the direction of the door.

"You shall not be disappointed, Pereny," replied Martinuzzi, sinking the tones of his voice, to a startling, but almost inaudible whisper. Then motioning the graf from the room, with an abrupt inclination of his head, he moved away.

"And now," he internally demanded, with vacant gaze, and letting his arms fall listless, by his side, as the door closed upon the form of the magnat, "what is to be done?"

The consideration involved in this little question, will, hardly, be deemed of trifling moment, either to the good name, the prosperity, or happiness, of Martinuzzi. It was impossible for him not to see, how they all were doomed to be staked, upon the issue of the next few hours. If ever man prized the unreal bubble, reputation, more than another, even, as would seem, to the extent of sacrificing the substantive rewards of a peaceful conscience, to acquire it:—if there ever was a man, (and there have lived many) prepared to barter the substance of desert, in his own bosom, for its false and fleeting reflection, in that of his fellow-creatures,—it was the individual, the mixed traits of whose noble character, with no flattering, however fond a pencil, we have feebly essayed, throughout these weak and perishable volumes, to depict. We confess our love for

the theme. We confess the swelling emotions, that overcome us, the closer we contemplate the genius, and (spite of all we have disclosed, or aught that will, anon, be more regularly developed, we will add) the virtues of Martinuzzi.

That we have not, as we fear, impressed the reader with an enthusiasm equal to our own, must be solely attributed to the imperfection of our pen ; but could we borrow, or steal, for, sooth to say, the motive would almost excuse us, that magic instrument, which writ the tragic tale of Eugene Aram; how would we transport the reader with love and admiration of the man, whose life, in some of its latter passages, we have undertaken to record! We might, then, have thrown into shade those failings, which, at least, had nothing in them of what is base, or sordid, but which seem to have been grafted, by human imperfections, upon the best and noblest of human aspirations, and unto which the well-known maxim of Horace, would be, at least, as applicable, as to the trifling blemishes, incident to some master-piece in art, or literature :—

> " Autem ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
> Offendar maculis quas aut incuria fudit
> Aut humana parum cavit natura."

What, though Martinuzzi's conduct may have been forced out of the right path, by an unhappy concurrence of circumstances, proving too strong for his inevitable infirmities, as a man, benevolence and charity were beating at his bosom. His offences grew out of the finest feelings, which do honour to the human heart; and that religion, which was, with him, no matter of idle form, but the deep and earnest offering of a sound head, and a tender heart, to the throne of Heaven, must have pleaded with the Author of his being ; and whatever were the *paucæ maculæ* which arose, for a time, upon the disk of this bright luminary, we entertain not the shadow of a doubt, but that the mercy of his Creator

would veil them from the eye of his purity, and that, consumed by the fervour of his repentance, and irradiated by his faith, they were never entered up for eternal judgment.

We have, insensibly, been led into this digression, owing to the reluctance we feel, at having to depicture, in this place, those darker shades of Martinuzzi's nature, to be wholly without which, were to transcend, or sink beneath, the level of humanity. To strip from our idol, the green bays, that were, at once, for an ornament and a covering;—to peer into the hidden mysteries of his nature, and dash aside, though with no irreverend hands, those fig-leaves, that veiled the peculium of his soul, even from his own shrinking consciousness — this is the painful task, which is now committed to us, as veracious historians, and though we would "nothing extenuate," we see no reason, why we should dwell lingeringly on the theme. To be brief:— the very circumstance of Martinuzzi being so chary of his reputation, urged him on to anticipate, and avert, by some desperate deed, the terrible assaults, with which the tottering fabric of his fame was threatened. His parental love contributed, not a little, to fortify his purpose; so that the most hallowed affections of his nature, became the snare of his soul.

However strong and vigorous his mental powers, the reader will have hardly failed to remark, on more than one occasion, in the course of this narrative, how tremblingly, in his nicely-balanced character, they harmonised with the vehemence of his passions; and "if," as Lord Shaftesbury observes,* "the strings of the instrument, though in ever so just proportion, are strained beyond a certain degree, it is more than it will bear." The image of slaughter, which his last words to Pereny, more than hinted at, retained its hold, on his inflamed imagination, after the magnat left the room. A smother,

* "Inquiry concerning Virtue." part i. § 3.

like the "dunnest smoke of hell," stopped his breath, and the blood seethed and bubbled in his veins. As thought after thought, like red and weltering billows, rolled with the sound of a rushing torrent upon his brain, he seemed to himself to be tossing on some sea incarnadine;—his mind was full of uproar, as if it were made the arena of contending elements. The equilibrium of exquisite feeling, and strong judgment was disturbed; and it was, we have reason to believe, in a paroxysm of incipient insanity, that Martinuzzi determined upon the assassination of the Graf Pereny.

"He shall hear from me," he muttered to himself, "ere mid-day, with a passport to the other world — he first, and then Vicchy; but, first, for Pereny. If this incontinent slave must needs blab what he knows,—in hell he may. His life has been one game of secrecy, and, now, until the peal of doom, I'd have him lie, unguessed at, hid under charnel-roofs, cut out of marble."

A horrible expression, sadly at variance with the usual rigid calm of Martinuzzi's countenance, broke out in deep furrows on his brow,..the agony of an instant doing the work of many years. Thus standing in an attitude of horror, the minute description of which we spare the reader, and which it would tax, even the high powers of Macready himself, to represent,..with maniac-visage,—eyes inflamed and wandering, and interlocked hands,—Martinuzzi called for his attendants. Emeric came into the room, but instantly started back, appalled at the sight of the passions, that were working in the regent's face.

"Gracious Heavens! your eminence!" he ejaculated.

With a voice hollow, inarticulate and inward, Martinuzzi spoke. "Ah! you may well appear surprised," he cried, and his eyes glared, with a wild and troubled light, as he held up his entwined hands; "but, sir," he proceeded, and a gloomy smile wrinkled his quivering

lip; "if the life, tortured within these fingers, make them glue themselves together thus, can I prevent it?"

Emeric was fearfully shocked, at the wildness of this bearing, so different, from the composed dignity of his lord's ordinary demeanour; but, on a sudden, as if sensible of the terrible impression he had made, Martinuzzi thralled, with his wonted self-tyranny, the demon within, and recovered the possession and command of his mental faculties. He then delivered his orders coolly and perspicuously, that an eye should be had to the person, who had just quitted his presence, and that, especially towards noon, the following day, the man's movements should be accurately reported to him.

Emeric signified his obedience, and the regent, having, by a mute gesture, waved him from the room, was left again to the hideous solitude of his own dreadful thoughts. We find it difficult, to accompany Martinuzzi to that dizzy height, where reflection tottered on the brink of distraction. The magnificence of his intellectual powers, his very strength of mind, only rendered the temporary overthrow of his reason, more overwhelming and terrific. We are fain to confess our inability, to paint the awful combat that was fought, on the sublime arena of Martinuzzi's brain, between religion and high moral principle, on the one hand, and the impetuous impulses of his nature, on the other; and we the rather shun the task, since judgment, reeling on her lofty throne, left the imagination only, the fuller scope to revel in delirium. We pass over, therefore, the intermediate gradation of his madness, and spare the reader the contemplation of a spectacle, more melancholy and more mortifying to human pride, than that of Babylon in ruins.

One word in respect to Pereny. On his departure, the magnat reflected, with no little surprise, on the eddy and whirlwind of that frenzy, which caused him,

however resolute his character, to tremble, during its access, as if he were destined to become its victim. There is ever something of awe, in the very sound, in which deep and concentrated emotion finds voice, and it almost seemed, that Martinuzzi was prepared to consummate the terribleness of his invectives, with the death of his denouncer.

Pereny was struck aghast, like the Philistines in the house of Dagon, when their ears first caught the prayer of Samson, and beheld the pillars of the fabric in his grasp. Perhaps these images of terror — this first reeling of the edifice of his worship was not altogether illusory. The instinctive forebodings, which crept, with an icy chillness, through his veins, may have been the obscure, and shuddering intimation of his inner spirit, that his hour was almost come;—but why should we anticipate, and lament calamity before it reach us ?* Alas ! the evils of the day are sufficiently mournful, and painful to elucidate. Time rushes onwards like the winter's wind, bearing terror and desolation on his wing. Let us wait.

"What need a man forestall his date of grief?"†

Yet a little while,..a few brief hours and minutes, frightfully huddled together, like the last hard gasps of death, and the eventful maze of Pereny's life will be thridden, and his fate be no longer a mystery.

* See a sentiment to the above purport in one of the magnificent chorusses of Agamemnon, beginning at verse 242.

† Milton.

## MANUSCRIPT XXX.

" It is their trick
To analyze their own and others' minds;
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will
Dangerous secrets."—*The Cenci.*

It was reported, in the course of that day, that the Richter Iwan, after traversing the country, with his free bands, had pitched his tent, within a short day's march of the city. Men spoke also, with certainty, of the Turkish armies having quitted the vicinity of Belgrade, and violated the Transylvanian frontiers, and it was even given out, that the Ottoman emperor was with his troops in person. The great Graf Pereny, so long supposed dead, was said to have been spoken with, by several; and Abu Obeida, the Turkish envoy, must have privately returned to the city; since he was seen, on the previous night, near the line of tents, erected for the accommodation of his retinue, at the top of the High-street. Each of these rumours possessed more or less interest, for the good citizens of Hermanstadt. But what, perhaps, affected the public mind most deeply, was the circumstance of the National Diet, which had not assembled for a considerable period, having been convoked by Martinuzzi, to meet him at Coloswar, for the alleged purpose of their legislating, upon the matter of the disappearance of the sacred crown, though, in reality, as was surmised, with the view of having his usurpation of the govern-

ment of the country ratified, by a regular form and regal title. These various rumours were afloat, throughout the day, towards the close of which, that terrible storm, the like of which had never before been witnessed, in Hermanstadt,* and which had subsided during the night, raged, if possible, with greater violence, than on the day preceding. Being a Wednesday, in the last week of Advent, it was, of course, held as a fast throughout the catholic world, and, at night, high mass was celebrated in the church of St. Theresa.†

It was on that occasion, that an incident befel, which, in the infallible spirit of subsequent divination, was remembered, as ominous of the fatal catastrophe of the morrow. As loud hosannas, from the full choir, died in the lengthened aisles, and vaulted roof, at the commencement of the dreadful sacrifice, the officiating priest, who happened to be the private chaplain of the cardinal, probably through awkwardness, upset the chalice, and the consecrated element flowed over the altar. All present, grandees, no less than spectators of inferior note, were horrified ;‡ and a subsequent event, having reflected an extrinsic, and superstitious importance, on the *mal-adresse* of the priest, it was long before it ceased to be a subject of interesting application, with most of the congregation, among whom, neither the least, in point of rank or beauty, were Queen Isabella and her pale daughter. As the people gazed, in commiseration, on the latter, who, in decaying youth and loveliness, resembled some exotic, drooping beneath the open skies, they could not prevent

* A historical fact.

† We believe, that at the present day, only black mass can be celebrated after the hour of noon. It must, however, have been otherwise at the date of our tale. We learn, incidentally, from Sir Walter in the beginning of "The Fair Maid of Perth," that the ceremony of high mass was performed in the evening ; but the era was earlier.

‡ "This anecdote proves," says the historian, "that the great in Transylvania, in the sixteenth century, were no less superstitious than those they governed."

an obtrusive fear creeping to their hearts, that, according to the old superstition,* she was one, too pure, and too beloved of Heaven, for Time to be allowed to heap his sear and withered hours, on her decay; yet little, did the most apprehensive of that congregation forebode, within how short space of time, the delicate creature, whom to see was to love, and to love to pity, was fated to be summoned back, to the home of her nativity. The tender interest, which the appearance of the Lady Czerina naturally inspired, insensibly became converted to a feeling, in respect to her guardian, of no amicable character. Like those sea-monsters of Africa,† that lure children in their folds, to devour them, he had cast his snares, round their young sovereign; and the citizens of Hermanstadt, ever distinguished for their loyalty,‡ were not slow, in attributing her evidently declining health, to his purposed usurpation.

It is ordained, in the very constitution of our nature, that we should wish,

"To defend against the world,"§

to cherish the feeble, and the oppressed; and if this kind of *στοργη*, or sacred instinct of humanity, be called forth, in favour of one, possessing the additional, and combined claims of youth and merit, royalty and loveliness, it would almost seem, its influence on our conduct must be resistless. It is certain, that under the impression of the moment, regards, of no very gentle description, were showered from all quarters, upon

* *Ὀν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος*
*τὸ γὰρ θανεῖν οὐκ ἀισχρὸν ἀλλ ἀισχιῶς θανεῖν.*

Rich. Franc. Phil. Brunck. Poeta Gnomici, P. 231. Edit. 1784. See also Herodotus, l. 1. c. 31.

† The Lamiæ.

‡ Cives Cibinienses, qui ab initio semper fideles se exhibuerunt regiæ majestati.—Pray. Annal. P. v. page 491.

§ Don Juan.

the dignitary, who, in his "sacerdotal accoutrements"* of violet satin,† stiffened with golden embroidery, was officiating at the altar.

A fearful change appeared to have fallen, over the countenance of Martinuzzi, which, combined with an inexplicable wandering, and perturbation of manner, soon converted those glances, already sent in anger, to looks of inquiry and amaze. There was an air of discomposure about his whole person; — his ordinary dignity and stately self-possession, seemed to have forsaken him,..supplanted by a humbleness, perhaps more impressive; his usual firm step tottered; he had grown deadly pale, and the broken and faltering tones, in which the holy service was spoken, sounded very unlike, to the wonted calm, and deliberate enunciation of Martinuzzi.

When the holy pomp of those impressive rites had come to a close, the cardinal approached the royal party, to interchange such courteous common places, as, in all ages of the world, have been, more or less, in requisition, upon occasion. As conspicuous, with erect fronts and blanched visages, the lord cardinal and the youthful queen looked on one another, the spectators could not but be conscious, — most of them, perhaps, for the first time, — of a powerful likeness between the oppressor and the oppressed.

Czerina's plastic lineaments, the unerring index of her heart, seemed to give back, with minute and painful fidelity, the worn, and haggard expression, that brooded over the physiognomy of her guardian. Her frame, too delicate for the struggle with her feelings, was rapidly yielding to that secret anguish, which pressed upon her, though her magnanimity endeavoured to conceal it from Martinuzzi. She felt her young spirits wither up, before

* Addison.

† Violet; the penitential colour, worn on all the Sundays, and feriæ of advent.

that uncommunicative, stately, but mild dejection,.. that solemn sadness of manner, which, so to speak, sublimed her sense of the inflexible tenor of his proceedings. There was a sacredness in his very sternness, that acted upon her, like a spell ; but the still atmosphere, she breathed never thrilled to the accents of complaint, or rather, the very silence of her broken-heartedness, conveyed the bitterest reproach.

Oh ! what are we, the creatures of an hour, — the dying, mid a dying world, — how has the Framer of our human nature constituted us, that we should thus indulge in harsh and hurtful passion, and take delight, to distress and triumph over brethren, for whom mutual sorrows and a common fate should teach us sympathy ? Why, from the bleak wind of this merciless wide world, is there no shelter, save in the shadow of the tomb ?

I was struck with a sentiment in Eugene Aram, originally started by Goëthe, and, not long since, fearfully illustrated in the writings, and death of the unfortunate Champavert,* — namely, that not the breast of an individual breathing, but hides a secret something, which, were it laid bare to-day, would make you abhor him. I know not, if this be strictly true, but of the converse of the proposition, I feel as convinced, as that my pulses beat. If Plato was right, when attempting a definition of the soul,† he termed it a harmony, to which God's own ear listens delighted, sure I am, that, on the diapason of the heart of every human being, some one redeeming note must intrude, — "some minor third, or flat seventh,"‡ — deeply steeped in, or, at least, like all the fine and hidden sympathies of our nature, not unallied to melancholy, which, could it be discerned, in its simple and touching reality, might disarm the bitterest wrath of our fellow-creatures,

* See Contes Immoraux par Petrus Borel le Lycanthrope.

† De Republ. lib. x. See also Browne's Religio Medici.

‡ Moore.

and, amalgamated with a single essential, enforce forgiveness from our Creator, or there is no truth in the gospels of Heaven.

> " Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
> But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."*

The look of diabolical, and, as it almost seemed to Martinuzzi, of triumphant exultation, with which Isabella would have fixed him, as with a spear, might only the day before, have pierced through the thick felt that wrapped about his thoughts; but now, his soul was circumfused in an atmosphere of such subtle and poignant emotion, that no idea, on this side heaven, *save one*, could find entrance or subsist there ; — aught else " passed by him, as the idle wind, which he regarded not." He, however, with an instinctive, though unconscious shudder, averted his eyes from Isabella, and cast them, with a long gaze of strong emotion, which blended a variety of feelings, upon the beauteous head of her, who was as dear, and necessary to his life, as the vital stream, that bubbled through the arteries of his heart. Lingering and tremulous was the sigh, that involuntarily heaved up from thence, as he turned to this frail and sentient thing, the fibres of whose being were so subtlely entwined, with those of the parent stem, that every pang, that shook her bosom, found a responsive echo in his own.

" Lady," he said, in that low, clear whisper, which never spoke in vain to her heart's sympathies ; " I would have discourse with you to-morrow, as soon as you have done your orisons, — no, towards mid-day ; be you ready to receive me, in your chamber, and alone."

Like some leaf of poplar, that quivers and turns pale, when a light motion, soft as an infant's breath, steals on the ambient air, shrunk Czerina, beneath the serene regard of Martinuzzi. Having signified her acquiescence,

* Merchant of Venice, Act 5.

by a tremulous inclination of her head, she lowered her eyes, and soon after, the prelate, with some customary phrase of benison, passed beyond the grated screen of the chancel, and thence retired, through a narrow door, that privately communicated with the castle.

The aisles and cloisters of that holy edifice were hardly made more visible, by the mystic and semi-light, which the votive, and scattered luminaries around shed on its sombre architecture. A single figure,..it was that of a man, and apparently a warrior, would often, during the service, lean earnestly forward, from behind one of the side pillars, that held up the grained ceiling of the church, and which half concealed him in its shadow. This person, from some undefined cause, early attracted the attention of Isabella. He stood apart from the rest of the worshippers, and it seemed to the queen, that he wished to escape their observation.

Just as the cardinal was addressing himself to Czerina, this man emerged, from the dim background of the aisle, and crossed to the door, through which the last of the congregation were withdrawing. As he passed forward, he turned his uplifted face, for an instant, towards the escutcheoned gallery, where Isabella sat. In that brief space of time, she obtained a full view of his countenance, which she at once recognised, for that of the Graf, Peter Pereny.

" 'Tis well ! forewarned — forearmed," murmured Isabella, to herself, and, during her passage from the church to the palace, her thoughts were occupied, with respect to the motives, that probably prompted the sudden reappearance of one, of so singular a character, on the stage of active life ; and she was providently anticipating the various hazards, and preparing, in thought, successfully to go through that difficult task, which the course of events had chalked out for her.

By advancing the progress of our narrative about two hours, we arrive at the point of time, when Antoine Fer-

raro was to give Father Dominick the meeting, beneath the ruinous porchway before described. Mournfully, and slow, swung the deep, sullen clang, of the cathedral bell, on the fierce and sweeping winds, as they creaked over the white and wintry city. Midnight pealed through the serried clouds, and the dense and sensible air did catch, and carry on the warning, along the waste paths, where the ruler of the storm careered at his will.

As the last stroke chimed away in the vault of distance, the trap-door was slowly raised, and a living form emerged, into the deep obscurity of the dilapidated entrance.

"Who art thou?" demanded the voice of one, already shrouded in the gloom.

"A man, who hath but lately learned to know himself," was the response, delivered after a brief pause.

"Marc Antoine?" again asked the first speaker.

"The same,—and thou?"

"Thy father, boy!" replied Pereny, who had advanced close beside him, and now pressed him to his heart.

There was a long, deep pause, made sacred by the emotion which produced it.

"Why art thou silent, Antoine?" said Pereny, at length. "Do thy feelings overcome thee, or dost thou marvel to recognise these familiar accents? 'Tis the black Scipio, indeed, who addresses you, my son, but no less Pereny."

"Wonderful!" cried Ferraro. "And your motive for this long disguise, dear sir?"

"The time suits not now to explain," replied Pereny; "did it, I have matter even more important, to unfold. It is of thyself, I have to speak at present: Antoine, thou must pluck thy fatal passion, for the Lady Czerina, from thy heart,—thou canst never wed her."

Ferraro was silent.

"Bear the blow, my son, as becomes the high blood of

Pereny. Martinuzzi is not to be moved — he refused his consent to the union."

"And is his consent indispensable?" asked Ferraro. "She is queen in Erdély, and surely may dispose of her hand, where she has given her heart."

"My son," said Pereny, placing a folded paper in the hands of Ferraro, "receive this, and when you have read over its contents, you will have conviction, of what I am about to inform you. The Lady Czerina is not the rightful sovereign of these realms!"

"What mean you?" demanded Ferraro.

"She is not the daughter of King John and Isabella."

"*Not the daughter of Isabella!*" echoed Ferraro, in a sharp and piercing voice.

"Were those words yours, Antoine? — methought the voice sounded foreign to my ears."

"Surely none but mine, dear sir,—only explain what riddle lurks in your words!"

"Be not overwhelmed, my son," returned Pereny, "for it is certain, the tyrant hath authority to prevent you ever marrying Czerina, if, indeed, after what I shall disclose, you should still affect the alliance."

Ferraro drew in his breath, through his compressed lips. "Proceed," he said, in a low trembling voice.

"That lady reaches, indeed, at the seat of kings," continued Pereny, "and the world admires her specious rank — deception all the while.—Oh! well may the queen turn coldly from the person of her injury, nor cherish the offspring of the man, who cozened her!"

"Of whom?" cried Ferraro, as if gasping for breath. "Speak on."

"Of Martinuzzi," answered Pereny. He paused, for the evident difficulty with which Ferraro drew the vital air, terrified him. "I will not believe thee so utterly degenerate, from the blood and sentiments of thy ancestors, Antoine," he said, "as to be overcome by these tidings. Why dost breathe so hard?"

"'Tis nothing," returned the other, in a failing voice, "or 'twill pass away; but, for God's sake! say on — to the purpose. Martinuzzi's daughter, you tell me — if you speak, sooth, in the name of mysterious Providence! who was her mother?"

"The late king's sister, of whom you have heard men speak."

"The Princess Beatrice — I see it all!" screamed Ferraro; "I've known as much for years. Omniscient Nature proclaimed the mighty secret. I felt it whispering, working through every sentient fibre of my loathing frame. With all my heart, sense, mind, soul, I could have hated; but —— gulled fool!—cozened!—abused! ha! ha! ha! ha!" and shrilly horrible, echoed the laugh, in that lonely spot. "God! — the weight, you have removed from my free spirit! — what imposition!"

"Marc Antoine! my son! — have you lost your senses?" cried Pereny.

"Nay," replied Ferraro; "let me, for an instant, give vent, to my long-smothered feelings, let me taste the pure unadulterated luxury, of being allowed to hate. Oh God!" he continued, in a low deep murmur, "what prophets our naked instincts prove, whilst our reasons are but mole-eyed! That white and meek abhorrence, Martinuzzi's branded bantling all the while!—*I did think as much!* — Now, I thank Heaven for this!"

"Dear Antoine!" exclaimed Pereny, pressing his hand affectionately, on his son's shoulder; "madness is in thy words — what distraction is it, hath seized you? — Be more a man! as thou art the heir of my hopes and wishes, be the heir of thy father's firmness also."

"I will, sir," said Ferraro; but his breath, which heaved thick as he spoke, showed, with what difficulty, he was compelling himself, to assume an appearance of composure. "Oh, doubt it not, — 'tis past,—I'm calm; — what else?"

"Not now, my son," replied Pereny, "I can tell thou

art overwrought, though, wherefore, I hardly guess. We will postpone any further discussion of the subject, till to-morrow — the surprise hath proved too sudden: read that manuscript, which I delivered into thy hands; I need not caution thee, to be mindful of it; — its perusal will instruct thee of what importance it must be to the vindication of justice, to keep it safe — from *him* especially. In the course of this night, or at early dawn to-morrow, I shall receive despatches, from the Richter Iwan, who is advancing upon Hermanstadt. All is false and hollow, in the position of Martinuzzi. The victory of Coloswar cost the nation dear, in blood and treasure, and its lustre hath been dimmed, by subsequent inaction. The magnats are disgusted — the easy populace are lukewarm, and the nation will shortly be taught to turn their eyes, toward the rightful heir of John of Zapola, as their only refuge in the storm. All things promise success to the holy cause, we have in hand. Antoine, the usurper must be unseated; but no more, at present; at mid-day to-morrow, I shall seek an audience of Queen Isabella, when every particular shall be disclosed to her grace, after which, events will reveal their own history."

"I cannot wait till then," cried Ferraro, in a breathless eager tone. "What of the rightful heir? — Who, if Czerina be not, can be the rightful heir of Hungary?"

"The son of John of Zapola, and Isabella."

"*The son!*—What is he?" gasped Ferraro.

"The Richter Iwan," said Pereny.

As if a cannon-shot had struck Ferraro, he reeled and reclined his body, apparently lifeless, against the doorway. Pereny, distressed beyond measure, leaned over him. "What aileth thee my son?" he said.

An instant sufficed to restore Ferraro, to the use of his faculties, mental and bodily; he roused himself, and, after a long-drawn sigh, that seemed sensibly to relieve his overcharged spirit, answered, "Something — a thought

crossed me, too mighty for belief — it stunned me, for an instant — 'tis over now — I am well.—*Great God! how well!*—And is the Richter so near at hand ?"

"We'll talk this over to-morrow, Ferraro," said Pereny; "after my audience with her grace, I will seek thee here. I trust to find thee stronger nerved at our next interview. Thou art so lately instructed in thy lineage, that thou hast yet scarcely learned to believe thyself a Pereny, or to think and comport thee, as befits one, of thy long line of ancestry. We rendezvous here to-morrow, and, in the interim, acquaint thyself with the contents of that manuscript: you will there learn — but hark!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself, "are not those voices climbing through the storm ? There's some movement in the city. Antoine, I can remain no longer. —the regent's fear dogs me, like a shadow — I must be wary."

As Pereny thus spoke, the two left the shelter of the porchway, and emerged beneath the black, inclement skies. All around was wrapt in wreaths of mist; and, 'mid the raging winds, and the frozen vapour, that hurtled by, they hurriedly exchanged congées, and striking into separate paths towards the city, parted company.

The form of Pereny was seen gliding, through the sheets of driving snow, and even after it vanished, in the dim shades of night, Ferraro paused, and seemed to listen, as if to ascertain the sound of his father's footsteps. The snow, which had been falling all day, lay deep upon the ground, notwithstanding which, as he stood, for a moment dubious, and wrapt in thought, he fancied, more than once, that his ears caught the trampling of a large body of horsemen,—*nor was he mistaken.* The dreams of the inhabitants of Hermanstadt, on that night, were broken by the clank of weapons and of harness; and many were the *bonnets-de-nuit*, thrust out of the opening casements, beneath which, peeped forth many a curious eye,

to witness the inexplicable occurrence of a long troop of men-at-arms, debouching without the city gates. The feeble gleams of starlight glittered, on the armour of the squadron, as it passed through the startled streets.

Meanwhile, Ferraro turned back, and having again arrived at the ruinous demesne, he sought out the spring of the trap-door, and, not to detain the reader with needless particulars, we present the individual in question, after a few minutes' space, seated at a table, in an inner chamber of Queen Isabella's suite of apartments. The room was lighted up, and the mantle and Spanish hat being thrown aside, who that hath once beheld, that voluptuous shape, and those glowing features, can fail to recognise, in spite of all the disguise of her male attire, the Messalina of our tale? She felt, for all the world, as if her very soul had just been cleansed, and purified, in the Thermæ, or hot-baths of Egypt, and that the strenuous ablution, had removed and purged away those noxious obstructions, which, for long, had obscured the finer pores of its "empyreal substance."* With this feeling of renovated existence, did Isabella instantly set about perusing the important manuscript, which we herewith lay before our reader.

## THE CONFESSION OF ALICIA.

"Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebam quidquid amarem, amans amare."—*Confess. St. August.*

"Seated alone in this subterranean chamber, with no friend to direct,—not even to weep to; none near, to minister to my wants, and speed my soul on its dark journey, I yet am sensible of my approaching dissolution.

* Milton.

I *feel*, though no voice hath whispered it, the blanched colour of my cheek, and mark the chill and lazy blood, receding into its customary channels. They told me, they had sent for a holy man, at present sojourning at the neighbouring chateau of Count Rodna,—but, alas! my few remaining sands are numbered, and unless he hasten, the last minutes in my glass of frailty, will be run down, ere he arrive. So, having consulted with my secret soul, I inscrol the following narrative of a maiden's dreamy existence, and enfeoff to the shrinking gaze of mankind, her feelings and her failings, to serve at once as my self-inflicted pennance, and as some expiation, however unavailing, to the deluded land of my birth.

" I, and my brother were twins, and being early left orphans, were attached in childhood by the Countess Scæpas, on whose territory we were born, to the regal establishment of their son, then the waivode of Transylvania. From my earliest recollection, I was contemplative above my years, and sensitive beyond my station. All my thoughts were, so to speak, emotions, and not a single emotion touched my bosom, which, by some internal alchemy, was not transmuted, after a short period, into LOVE. Love made the instinct of my being, the loadstone, which attracted to itself every attribute of my nature. I know not how it may be with other girls, but the rich maternal feelings, I lavished, without exhausting, on my favourite wooden doll, the tender assiduity, with which I cherished the senseless image, I cannot call to mind, even at this final hour of life, without a sigh of sensibility. Oh! why was this poor weak throbbing heart of mine, formed with such capacity, for the enjoyment of sympathy?* Why was my soul so made up of tenderness and passion? Why was this feeble frame, now sink-

* " A quoi bon, m'avoir fait naitre avec des facultés exquises sans avoir effleuré du moins cette enivrante volupté que je sentais?"—Rousseau, Confess. partic. 11, l. 9.

ing fast, into the cold tomb, at once so ill-suited to the rude touch of this wrong world, yet endowed with burning capabilities of bliss? Why was this, when all were so many snares to allure me to destruction? Why was I not gifted with some antagonist strength, to enable me to resist the force of such enervating qualities, as have proved the bane, and bliss of my past existence? Why was I doomed to partake with angels in their glorious privilege, if that, which makes the blessing of those regions which I contemplate, is to be the curse of mortality? But let me not repine,—let me not expostulate with my Maker. Death, the great solver of all that seems beneath the sun, advances with rapid strides, and I feel assured, that that Great God, who made me in his image, and whose mercy is as infinite as his power, hath some mode in store, to redeem his creature, and will not visit hardly, those weaknesses and innate tendencies, which, subsisting under some better modification of being, might have constituted my chief merit. Here, alas! they have proved the source of frailty and of crime,—in heaven, who knows, they may deserve the name of virtues. But, as I was saying, on every thing, that came before me, my childish heart rested in love,—the blossoming tree, or variegated flower,—a horse, dog, bird, the golden fish, or the glittering butterfly, the veriest worm, that trailed its length, before my path,—all things, animate or inanimate, became, to my deep and gentle nature, a source of that heavenly joy, humanity experiences in loving,—from all, by the alchemy of a creative genius, would I extract the honey dew of affection. I would invent situations, and imagine dispositions and sensations, for the objects of my instinctive fondness. In idea, I could penetrate the thoughts of a rose-bud, or read the heart of the familiar stork, but the favourite bias of my nature, was, dreamingly, to make myself the confident and friend of the ferocious, or venomous denizens of the forest,—to commiserate and sympathize, with what the rest of man-

kind held in terror or loathing,—to lose my own identity, and herd in thought, with the untamed boar, or crouch, by the side of the spangled viper. I learned to go out of myself, and to live in them; to participate their imaginary joys; to sympathize with their fictitious sorrows; to weep over their abhorred state; and from man's usage, to seek the origin of their peculiar natures, and discover the plea, and palliation for their proper vices.

"This was a strange propensity for a female, though while that female remained a child, however uncommon, it could scarcely be deemed hurtful; but as years rolled on, the habitual practice of conjuring up unreal circumstances, to lament or rejoice over, softened and enervated the heart, till at last, the most minute incident came to be viewed, through a deceptive and gigantic medium, and occurrences, which, from their insignificance, would leave little or no impression upon others, exalted my spirits, to the most buoyant excess; or, on the other hand, as powerfully depressed them. A word casually dropped, or an inadvertent glance, were sure to be treasured up, in my mind, and when revolved over in solitude, became tortured into a thousand meanings,—the source of what agony, or how great exultation!—The constant cultivation of the metaphysic faculty I spoke of, had developed my imagination to that degree, that I could at pleasure dive into the secret thoughts of all, who came under my observation. Whether, and how far, I was right in my judgments, I know not, but since I invariably discovered goodness and virtue, lurking in the heart, even if they evidently failed to inspire the conduct, of every individual, on whom I tried my skill, I am apt to fear, that the instinctive acumen, on which I prided myself, must have been considerably warped and influenced, by that benevolent solicitude, which led me to descry, with too microscopic a vision, the palliatives of crime, and extenuate, too much, the heinousness of vice. Owing to the goodness

of my patroness, my education was not neglected, and the stature of my mind, speedily outgrew that of my body. I became versed in history, and delighted, in my solitary musings, to invest the characters of antiquity, with an extrinsic halo, reflected from the false colouring of my own warm heart. By the subtle process, with which I filtered away aught objectionable, human nature stood to my mental gaze, purified from mortal dross. Catiline had a thousand excuses to offer, would Cicero but have heard them,—and Nero suffered a pang, worse than a several death, for every execution, he believed himself compelled to order. One consequence of this lamentable habit of ever finding excuses, gradually became apparent: the distinctive qualities of vice and virtue, were insensibly confounded together; and that indignation, which cruelty and injustice would otherwise have excited in my bosom, was neutralized, by my fatal power of conceiving, at will, palliative or justificatory circumstances, which wholly escaped the more obtuse vision of the rest of the world.

"Childhood knows no distinction, save of the affections. The Princess Beatrice, Rose Martinuzzi, and myself, were educated together. Our pastimes and studies were in common, sometimes partaken with, or relieved by, the presence of my brother Luke, and of George Martinuzzi. George Martinuzzi! how, even in this dark twilight of my existence, does my poor heart flutter, as my faltering pen traces the fatal name! Oh! why, why in this roomy world, was it ordered, that he, of all men living, should cross my path? But for that unhappy conjunction, I might have progressed through life to a peaceful grave, without reproach, without misery; I might have become the honoured wife of some patriot chief, the envied mother of a line of heroes; I might have played the part of Cornelia in Hungary. *I am*—but no! let me not think of what I am, lest, after all, I go down to the dust, and my task undone. A similar course of study, if not congenial natures, would bring George into private commu-

nion, more frequently with me, than with the princess, or his sister, who neither of them much delighted, in historical disquisition. George was some few years my senior, and considerably my mental superior. The choicest impulses of humanity, his heart drank in, with the breath of life, and the sacred past was, to his inspired vision, a fount of deep and prophetic lore, which might serve to regulate the conduct of statesmen, and determine the destiny of nations. Finding me not merely a patient, but a rapt listener, he naturally affected my company, and would daily effuse into my enamoured ears, his choice and precious thoughts, rich with the spoils of many a classic page. From his lips, the simplicity of abstract truth, or the hardness of political disquisition, came clothed with I know not what of radiancy. From examining the diversities of political power, and investigating the occult causes of the aggrandisement or decline of nations, he would take occasion to balance the actual interests of the European governments. I believe he considered me, although a mere child, a preferable auditor to the river and the forest; but he was under no more restraint in my presence, than in theirs, and would give vent to his lofty hopes and feelings in my hearing, in the like unpremeditated way, he was wont to do, when trees and waves were his only confidants. Hungaria, and the means of exalting her sons to liberty and knowledge, was commonly his lofty theme: and kings and conquerors might well and profitably have listened to his philosophy, and the luminous genius of a boy would enforce, with earnest ability, his high argument, till conviction, like strong inspiration of truth, fastened upon the hearer's mind. Frequently, and forcibly, would he dilate, on the true policy of King Ladislas,* in his delicate position between two potent empires, affirming, he should prevent either power obtaining a decisive superiority, by never

* The father of King Lewis.

joining in too strict relations with either, which were, he said, to make Hungary a dependent province, but by holding both Solyman and Ferdinand at distant amity, and by alternately closing the bands of alliance with one and the other, according to circumstances, to keep the balance even, and thus, by restraining both, make their rival views subserve the interests of his kingdom.*

"On this and like points of state government, which it was afterwards his destiny to illustrate so gloriously in the face of Europe, would George expatiate for hours together; and, oh heavens! I, when life was yet all verdure and freshness, with what entranced and childish admiration, all the while, would I ramble by his side, and hang with glistening eyes upon his every syllable, and every articulation, whilst my loud breathing, snatched during the pauses of his eloquence, alone bespoke my feelings. The cadence of his intermitting voice sounded, on these occasions, like unto Eolian music, heard in weird hours of night and solitude. It seemed as if my own soul were musing audibly, and all that was previously dark, doubtful, and erudite, the rainbow light of his argument flashed clear, on the misty horizon of my brain. And who would suppose, singularly dear as his society was to me, that there could be danger, to a very child, from such close intercourse? Nor, perhaps, despite my mental interpretation of every movement, and casual word of my companion, was there, while my girlhood lasted; but the custom we delight in, is not easily broken through, and these outpourings of Martinuzzi's soul were not discontinued, when the throbbings of my virgin heart intimated, but too plainly, how years progressed with me. But to him, it was all the same, and having gifted me, in my purer days, with the false title of his little sister, he

* Tum apud Ferdinandum, tum apud Solimannum quærebat, satis se utrique gratificaturum arbitratus si neutralis medius in duos preponderat. —Pet. de Reva, de Monarchia et S. Corona Regni Hung. Cent. vi.

looked upon me, in that regard, long after I disclaimed, from the bottom of my soul, the obnoxious epithet. Oh! for me, with more than the due allowance of that state of feeling, which nature herself apportions to a female, growing towards, and just entering, the estate of womanhood—for me, to hear him, in all the confidence of that innocent relationship, unburthen his ambitious soul!—to become the manuscript, in which he laid bare his inmost thoughts, that they might rule and regulate mine own;—to follow the peculiar train of his ideas, only to be led, by the like impulses;—to comprehend his noble nature so intimately;—to sympathise so deeply as I did, with all his aspirations;—to note those minuter characteristics, which escaped common perception;—to glow and pant beneath his kindling breath, and discern, in the same man, at once the brilliancy of consummate genius, and the confiding tenderness of infancy,—a tenderness, whose exquisite emotions ran alongside, with the elevation of his sentiment;—to think, feel, understand all this, in every fibre of my sentient frame;—to know how worthy, in every way, he was of woman's idolatry, and all the while tremble in his sight, lest he should penetrate the thrilling secret, that dissolved my soul, and wasted my body;—this, day after day, and night after night, a burning succession of hours, was the occupation of my passionate heart, during the vernal development of my youth. He set my whole being in a state of restless excitement, and, like Fame, was an object of desire, placed out of the possibility of fruition. He was unto me as some god, and every lovelier sight and sound of the teeming earth or the siderial heavens, would talk to me of George, or were only marked, as they reminded me of him. All material objects that did not, in their sublimity or their loveliness, tell a tale to my soul of Martinuzzi, were, so far as I was concerned, as though they were not. Indeed, the melancholy grandeur of our retreat was not unsuited to those romantic illusions, which insensibly incorporated them-

selves, as it were, with the substance of my mind. Magnificence ever affects solitude, and the residence of the Countess Scæpas was a venerable pile, couched and sequestered in her lap. There, eternal nature reigned over the huge and hanging woods, and pervaded their brown and solemn shadows; the deep blue lake, retired in the wild and rocky dell, was a scene to gaze on with delight. The sylvan haunts of my childhood — their winding paths, picturesque brooks, and nameless rivulets, unwarred on by tasteless wealth, and unembellished by fastidious refinement, were coeval with the hills they skirted, and virgin from the hands of their Creator. But to return. Other girls, probably, in the like situation, would not have guessed what ailed them, till they had celebrated many more anniversaries at the altar of life; but it was one natural consequence of my visionary *peculia*, to anticipate that climacteric, and I had not been so long accustomed, to pierce and analyse the most hidden thoughts, in the breasts of others, without my eyes also becoming gifted with a vision, to penetrate the secret of my own nature. That melting expression in my face, and the palling sweetness of my voice, which I had heard people praise, were the outward development of my extreme susceptibility. I knew, that if ever maiden loved truly and fervently, I did; but this knowledge, instead of inclining me to evite all occasions, which might, in any wise, contribute to my fatal prepossession, had a very contrary effect. The bands which bound me appeared, in this cherub dawn of young passion, a wreath of perennial blossoms; — I hugged them to me, till, one by one, the fair leaves of hope and promise dropped aside, and the cold iron, they once concealed from sight, struck the chillness of death to my bosom. But that was long after, and for years I cultivated, with all my care, the deadly weed, that sprang up in the rich soil of my heart; I found it so unalloyed a pleasure, in the early stages of my fascination. 'Tis true, the affection, that reigned in

my bosom, being unacknowledged, met with no requital; but, viewing George, at that time, more like the phantom of a youthful wish, than a human being, I was so weak as to believe I needed none. I had lived, from my earliest recollection, in the fairy fields of visionary fondness, of course without having met with any return; for what reciprocity of feeling could exist between me, and the dumb or inanimate things, on which I was wont to lavish the romantic tenderness of my nature. My love invariably took its rise from the pure, simple, unadulterated joy, I experienced in loving, and my present dream of bliss moulded itself, in conformity with the propensity of my mind.

"Oh! if to transmute my being* into a bird or plant, — to penetrate, in fancy, the peculiarities of its species, with the view of attaching myself the closer to some soaring eagle, or rare plant of craggy fount, — if this constituted the darling impulse of childhood, who can form a conception of the exquisite enjoyment, that for long I tasted, without interruption or alloy, when, in the primal excitement of sense, I made MAN my argument? and, in those indolent reveries, which were so dear to my silent temperament, analyzed and conned over the character of one, who, in all he said or did, won on the affections, and who, according to the credulous belief of a fond girl, presented in himself, the most choice specimen of humanity, that ever walked God's earth?

"But this could not last for ever, and I, at length, began to apprehend, from my involuntary tremors in George's company, — from my restlessness in his absence, and utter indifference to the major part of the objects around me, — from my voluptuous sleeplessness o'nights, and, more than all, from the wild and lawless wish, — the too unequivocal language of my dreams, that a

* This power appears somewhat similar to that of Fadlallah in the Persian Tales, of whom, probably, Alicia never heard.—ED.

maiden could not attach herself to a human being, with the same sinlessness and placid emotion, with which she loved a bird, in her pure childhood.

" This fatal truth, which I was slow in ascertaining, was only put beyond doubt by an occurrence, which happened to me in my eighteenth year, and which, for the better understanding of my unhappy story, I shall proceed briefly to relate.

" The waivode was accustomed, during his relaxation from state affairs, to sail in a splendid boat, he had brought for the purpose from the banks of the Duna, upon a lake, which was but a small distance from his mother's castle. George and my brother would commonly accompany him, and, occasionally, the Princess, Rose, and myself would join the party. I never received any great gratification from these aquatic excursions, — they were incompatible with those unreserved communications, with George, which I esteemed my dearest privilege. At no period of my life, could my disposition be called social; — my enthusiasm and fallacious delights, which were of too visionary and delicate a character, for participation or control, untuned my mind for rational converse. Every sentiment of my nature, and every feeling I indulged in, was a monopoly, and abhorred communication. From the rudeness of human intercourse, would I habitually retire to the family of my own thoughts, and, whether I found them winged, for heavenly contemplation, or wrapped, in the weeds of earthly sorrow, they alike incapacitated me for this world's business. In other respects, I was unfitted for social life; — I refined on every circumstance too much, and viewed all things, however indifferent, after a mode of my own, and with too critical an eye. The native solitariness and sensitive temper of my soul, was put to continual pain, in the company of unsympathizing friends. I was too alive to the slightest variations of treatment, felt so acutely the least slight, and was too seemingly artificial,

in all I said or did, to accommodate myself to the *convenances* of society. My thoughts ran not in the ordinary current, so neither could I endure a conventional tone of conversation. Trifles, which to others would be light as air, would prey upon my spirits, like the corroding cancer; — I was always in extremes. Where I was not wholly indifferent, I was commonly so deeply interested, that I feared to trust myself to open my lips,— for well I knew, my slow and sparing hyperboles, and enthusiasm, must appear affectation to those, who could not enter into my feelings. My intellects, in fact, were too masculine for my sex, my heart too eccentrically infantile for my age; so I would commonly sit, distant and abstracted, as if some cold spell had chained up my tongue to silence, and that the whole vocation of my soul were endless reverie.

" Such rooted habits constituted as uncompanionable a character, as can well be imagined ; but, however concentrated, and sombre my spirits, there was nothing, in reality, sullen in my reserve; and little did they, who thus beheld me, and doubtless turned away, alienated by my chill and unsociable deportment, — little did they dream, what a soft, doating, affectionate heart belonged to that solitary and affected creature, they half despised, half hated ;—little deemed they, what inextinguishable passion kept its fierce revels and tumultuous sabbath, under the snowy chillness of that virgin robe ! How could they guess at the cataract, the incessant foaming of the waters, beneath the crust and frost-work of reserve, in which I was driven to glaciate my nature ? Frequently have I been accused of want of feeling, owing to that apparent indifference, which, in truth, was only a proof of an excess of sensibility.

" On the occasions, to which I have alluded, I usually sate silent, and duly remote, from every one, at the stern of the vessel, watching, with side gaze, every stir of my friends, and every movement of the vampire of my heart.

On one of these expeditions, the dove, that nestled there, was surprised and scared, by the sudden visit of a new and unwonted feeling, which, like a viper, crept into my bosom, as I beheld Martinuzzi engaged, in low and close converse, with the Princess Beatrice. My love for George was the only selfish passion, I ever indulged in, but that was intensely, wholly so; and it was torture for me to witness another sharing in that confidence, I had insensibly accustomed myself to consider my sole right and property. I immediately endeavoured to discover, what they could be about. My tact in such matters, from long and frequent use, bordered on the marvellous, and my sense of hearing, like that of most sensitive people, was remarkably acute. I inferred, from the scarce perceptible direction of their eyes at intervals, towards where I was stationed, that I must be the subject of their discourse. This whetted my curiosity. Presently I distinguished the words, 'amiable' and 'sensible;' they issued from the lips of Martinuzzi. Oh, how my heart bounded, and my eyes sparkled, at his praise!

"'Say what you will, I cannot help my forebodings,' remarked the princess, after a pause. I was baffled; — to what could that observation refer? I rapidly turned it over in my mind — to no purpose; so I laid it by, to be revolved over at leisure, while I bent every faculty to catch something further, that might explain its purport, by implication. I arose from my seat, trod the deck for a few paces, and then reclined my head over the side of the vessel, considerably nearer than at first, to the spot, where the beings, who irresistibly compelled my surveillance, were conferring. Meanwhile, unobserved of most of us, the face of the heavens above began to alter; — a squall had come down from the mountains. It blew a hurricane; but no combustion of the elements could, I believe, have diverted my attention for an instant; and it might be augured, from their intent attitude and mutual abstraction, that the objects of my

earnest, though oblique regard, were equally unmindful of the sweeping storm.

" Some minutes elapsed, before either again broke silence, or, at least, until I could apprehend what was spoken. The voice I next heard was that of the princess. ' Then even let it be so,' she said, more clearly, if not more audibly ; ' I confess, I could have wished it otherwise, but, since you hold her so dear, and you ought certainly, by this time, to understand her disposition, I will myself, to-morrow, open the matter to her.'

" George made some response, in his previous undertone, when, at that moment, the gilded vessel, in which we stemmed the swelling surge, struck with violence upon a rock, and the whirling water rushed instantaneously, through the disruption of the planks, with irresistible rapidity. A scene of uproar and confusion ensued, that baffles description,—the hurryings to and fro,—the simultaneous consternation,—the quick sharp succession of shrieks, as the alternating billows dashed over the deck, and one after another immersed the crew, in its remorseless tide;—all was the frightful history of little more than a minute. Notwithstanding the perils, with which I saw myself surrounded, I was never more calm and collected in my life, and not only so, but never half so supremely blessed. Not the loud crash, — not the heart-rending yell, out-voiced and hushed at intervals, by the roaring wind, and the boisterous waves, rang on my ears; but the soft murmur of Beatrice's voice, the delirious words,—since you hold her so dear,—stilled my bosom to a state of halcyon serenity, while all around spoke death, and uproar. At the time of our accident, we were scudding along, at no great distance from the beach, and most of the company, trusting to their expertness in swimming, leaped overboard. Some few, however, determined to keep by the boat, till she should split, probably, with the desperate hope of clinging for safety to some broken plank, which the storm might drive on shore. The noble

waivode, at the instant of the vessel's striking, had rushed, to where the princess was seated, and with her braved the drowning waters. Almost at the same point of time, George threw aside his outer vesture, and folding his sister in his strong arms, plunged with her, into the waves. With anxious interest, I watched the dear swimmer for awhile, buffeting the tempestuous element. I was left to die, but, persuaded, from my own feelings towards him, that *my very memory* would be more dear to Martinuzzi, than all else left to him on earth, however precious, I awaited my impending doom, patiently at least, if not with content. Absorbed in these reflections, it was not until after some minutes, that the thought of my brother suddenly crossed my mind. I looked around, with a half-uttered exclamation. He was standing beside me, in an attitude, expressive of speechless, hopeless horror,—*he could not swim.* I turned to him, and addressed him in as soothing, consolatory terms, as I could: he would not be comforted,—he was in despair.

"'Oh God! oh God!' he would exclaim; 'I shall drown,—go to the bottom! Is there no hope? None, Alicia? must we both die?—so young too! Oh God! oh God!'

"I gently bade him confide in the mercy of Jesus. Foolish girl! to think it was religion, that solemnized my own soul to peace. Alas! it was love, and love alone, that lapped me in a serene atmosphere, above the feelings, and the fears, natural to my sex, and to ordinary humanity. While I was still busy, in essaying to inspire Luke, with a portion of my own false courage, my eye suddenly rested on the figure of a man, struggling against the waters, with lusty sinews, not towards land, but back to the leaking vessel. I looked hard,—oh that throb of my heart! the intrepid swimmer could be no other. I was not mistaken,—Martinuzzi shortly again stood upon the deck,

"'I come, my little sister,' he cried, 'to bear you back to safety. Will you trust yourself to my skill?'

"I replied only with a look,—he approached,—life was dear to me; never more so than at that moment,—but I thought of my brother. My whole manner must have bespoken my irresolution.

"'Oh save me,—save me!' entreated Luke; 'leave me not to perish.'

"George made no answer. I turned to him, and earnestly seconded my brother's pleading.

"'No, dearest Alicia!' he replied, after a pause of surprise, rather than of doubt; 'this must not be,—the present opportunity is yours, but I make no doubt, there is yet time, to preserve your brother's life also.'

"'And will you return to save me?' demanded Luke, grasping George's hand; 'only do so, and I will be your slave for ever.'

"'I pledge you my word, I will return," answered Martinuzzi, but if you detain your sister any longer, I may return too late.'

"'Then go, Alicia,' said Luke, waving me from him. I waited not a second bidding, but let the being, I loved with such unutterable devotion, clasp me round, in his dissolving arm. Oh the exquisite sensations I must not think of!—the thrilling consciousness, that made the elysium of the next ten minutes! They were worth an immortality of ordinary existence. Not those billows, which seemed broke loose from all control, bounded more riotously than did my heart. But I dare not now dwell upon that tumultuous swim, since, the source to me of many cherished, and darling ruminations. Enough; too soon the impetuous waters of the lake were breasted,—and George, as he consigned me over to some of the attendants, observing my eyes closed, and my cheek as pale as death, imagined me insensible. Would that I had been,—but every principle of my nature was but too alive! 'poor

child!' ejaculated my preserver, in a piteous tone, as he hung over me for an instant, and then *pressed his ripe red lip to mine*. What all the danger and mental terror of the last half-hour, had failed in effecting, that intoxicating KISS accomplished in an instant,—it thrilled through my bones, with electric facility. One minute I gasped for breath, and then, faintly smiling, swooned away.

"The waking dreams of the following twelve hours, are never to be obliterated from my memory. For my own life, and that of my brother, I was indebted to George Martinuzzi;—the bravest, the dearest of men!—They had borne me to my couch, and having caused me to swallow a composing draught, left me to repose; the potation indeed, acted as an opiate on my senses, but it did not put me to sleep;—*how could I sleep?* How could I exchange, for the balm of present oblivion, the too seductive circumstances of the past, and my vague gilded glimpses into the future? How could I forego the extacy of recalling to mind, every minutiæ of those maddening minutes, when I hung by my deliverer with the gripe of fate,—or, what was as strong, of love; and when the brawling surge, and the wild winds only acted as an excitement, and served to excuse my clinging all the closer, to his athletic frame. How could my thoughts cease to revert to that electric fire, which ran through every fibre, and every articulation of my body, as Martinuzzi pressed his lip to mine? How, above all, could I consent to lose, in the forgetfulness of slumber, the blissful visions, which the few words of the Princess Beatrice opened to my view,—'Since you hold her so dear!' A thousand times did I repeat to myself the soul-ravishing sentence. But ever and anon, I would flog my wits, in the vain hope of anticipating the communication, which the princess was to make to me on the morrow. All at once, as I was going the round of conjecture, the electric thought shot through my brain, that it had relation to Martinuzzi,

and that he had confided to the princess, the fact of his passion for her handmaid, and had solicited her interest with the Countess Scæpas, and her gentle offices, in breaking the matter to myself. For some minutes after this fond hallucination crossed me, I was like one entranced, my heart palpitated, my bosom heaved, an insensible dew distilled itself, through every pore of my glowing body; I lay still and motionless, *dissolved in the calm of reverie and sensation.* A deep feeling of tranquillity stole over me,—it was not content, it was more ravishing; it was rather like an emanation from Heaven, as if the spirit of pure angelic bliss had descended on my soul. For hours, I remained in this state of soft, still, beatic passiveness, unable to bring my thoughts into any consecutive train, through very thoughtfulness. But to that first night of paradisaical felicity,—that last of peace,—let memory no longer recur. It past; the day breathed fresh again, and I was walking on the ramparts of the castle, when the princess, as I had expected, joined me. The horrors of the preceding day naturally formed our first topic of discourse, which presently turned on that individual, who, like an interveuient angel, had saved myself and my brother from a watery grave. Anticipating the disclosure of her highness, and confused in some measure, by my remembrance of the past night's voluptuous reverie, a strange embarrassment came over me; my lip quivered, my tongue faltered, as I attempted to express my sense of George's services, and I was only recalled to myself, by observing to my surprise, that the princess appeared to have lost her wonted self-possession, even more utterly, than I had mine.

" ' Exactly so, Alicia,' she continued more intelligibly, after having delivered herself for some time, with no little incoherency. ' He is as you say, every way deserving of our esteem—of love, and, since we are on the subject, I would entrust a circumstance—a secret to my dear friend, that —— it is a matter, nearly concerning Martinuzzi,

and—' she hesitated—my breast heaved with expectation —my eyes glistened with my secret thought—my breath was stifled by the swellings of my heart—I felt my face burn like fire, and my blood circulate with a brisker flow—' and myself,' concluded Beatrice, her fine countenance all of a glow. I started back in amazement and despair; the blood receded to my heart: 'And your highness!' I faintly ejaculated, with a voice, lost in the throb of astonishment. ' Alicia!' exclaimed the princess, in accents, that will never die away from my remembrance, at the same time reverting her face, and enfolding in her palm, scorching as heated coal, my bloodless hand. ' He, who yesterday saved your life, and the being, who now addresses you, have long been mutually attached. It were vain hoping for my mother's consent to our union, so we do not intend asking it,—but during the countess' absence from the castle, we purpose being privately married. It will be requisite, there should be witnesses of the ceremony, and George has pitched upon yourself and brother, as being individuals, whom we both prize most highly, and in whom we can securely confide, to be present at our espousals. Will you, dearest Alicia, oblige your old friend and playmate, in this matter; will you?'—and the princess ventured to raise her eye to mine.

"' Holy Mary!' she abruptly demanded, ' What ails you, child?'—*What ailed me!* I was pierced to the heart —pierced by the words, as with a two-edged dirk. I uttered not a syllable, but sank down lifeless at her feet.— Though I long remained under this suspension of existence, I at length awoke again to the cares, and the duties of this changed, and disenchanted earth; but from that hour, I date the end of all, that constituted the zest of life. The innocent freshness of my day-dreams was past—how ill exchanged for the racking, stinging, illusive joys, which a too susceptible imagination was capable of substituting! The witchcraft, by which my soul was enabled to live, in another being, and identify itself with all his thoughts,

and his feelings, was defeated; the enchantment that made the occupation of my heart was gone, dissolved, like some aerial frost-work of the night, in the rays of the morning sun; but from the first, I never, even in a passing thought, accused Martinuzzi of my misery. That christian propensity, which formed so prominent a feature in my character,..the microscopic eye, with which I was accustomed to search out, and invest with a factitious importance every circumstance, however minute, that might palliate the enormity of guilt, proved at least so far beneficial, that it taught me, how to do justice to the innocent. I felt, that George had never entertained the shadow of a suspicion of my partiality for him. Well, time,—which, whether on lagging or light pinion, according to mortal apprehension, *will* pass—rolled on, and brought the hour at last, in which (it was about a week subsequent to the communication above narrated,) the princess and Martinuzzi stood before the altar to be united; I, and my brother were present. Of what occurred at the ceremony, I can tell nothing. How I preserved the outward mask of consciousness, I know not; I felt a film gather before my eyes, till all objects floated in a dim and nightmare mist; there came a rushing sound in my ears; my senses reeled; but though I was hardly able to support or guide myself, I did not, as I every instant apprehended I should, drop down a corpse upon the pavement. I retained, to the end, the horrid composure of outbreathed despair, and not ti l I turned the key in the lock of my chamber door, that night; did I give vent to my pent-up feelings. THAT NIGHT!— *the bridal night of George!* Oh, that the remembrance of its sympathetic, illicit, its fallacious transports, its intolerable torments would fade into eternal oblivion!— but no, while one thought exists within this brain, and one pulse beats within my mortal frame, it is not to be obliterated. Years roll on in vain, no time can wipe away the emembrance of how I passed that conscious, sightless

night. Jesus forefend! that the approaching gasp of death be not a sigh of desperate desire, and that in the dark bourne, whither I am hastening, the recollection of my madness when alive, do not haunt me, and constitute the dreadful penalty of my crimes.* The next morning I was raving; I had been seized with a brain fever, and to my intellectual eye, the bright sun became obumbrated, and the moon was either lost in her void and interlunar circuit, or else beamed through the night, with rays incarnadine. From this awful state I did not recover for many weeks. While I was yet unconscious of all external circumstances, the countess returned to the castle; she visited my chamber, and, it seems, shortly divined, from my flighty and heart-rending exclamations, the nature of my malady, and ascertained the astounding fact of her daughter's nuptials. The countess was a woman of great decision. Ere I quitted my sick chamber, she had, by dint of deep manœuvring and extraordinary conduct, effected the separation of the newmarried couple. Martinuzzi had become a monk of the order of St. Paul the hermit; and the princess, unhappy lady! was in a condition, little less lost and pitiable, than that, out of which I had just emerged. From this period, I would leap over some few years.

"John of Zapola, at the point of time I again solicit the attention of the reader of this memoir, was elected to the throne of Hungary, and, shortly after his accession, the Countess Scapas died. Mindful of their former friendship, the king employed his mother's protegè in several important negociations, and the first rounds of that ladder, which hath, at this day, conducted Martinuzzi to the topmost height of fame, were already scaled. John had taken, for the partner of his throne, Isabella of Poland. The Princess Beatrice resided under the palace roof, and I was retained near her person, rather

* "Quæ cura vivos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos."

as her friend and confidant, than in any meaner capacity. Her mother's arbitrary proceedings, on discovering her marriage, had, irreparably, shattered the princess's intellects. This circumstance, combined with the difficulty of Martinuzzi's having taken ecclesiastical vows, induced him to postpone the acknowledgment of their union, but the mutual affections of the lovers continued unabated, and, at seasonable periods, it was my appointed task to contrive their sabbath-nights of intercourse, which, however hallowed by their exclusive loves, were *to me*. .... And I still loved George, though with an anguished and consuming love; my passion contracting, in some nameless way, a new zest and an appropriate piquancy, from the insuperable barrier, which fate opposed to its proper gratification. Every smallest air that blew from him to me, came redolent with scents of Araby. To creep unnoticed to his side, and touch his person as he passed, or the ground, he had hallowed by his tread; to study all manner of kindly offices, that I might elicit his ineffably soft smile, and urge his plaintive voice, made the sick and miserable delight of my days; and suspiring his name by stealth, like a spell of power, to bring him to my mind, in the weird and double silentness of moonlight, the ineffable charm of my lorn nights. It were hard to say, whether I were more ruined by the adultery of my imagination, in his society, or by my senses running riot, with the materials of memory, when he was away from me. What, to me, were the externals of time and place?—they mattered not; if I shut my eyes, I could let my thoughts loose in imagination, and gaze on the picture at my core. I bore about with me, his fatally seductive image every where. What though long corridons intervened between us, we could interchange soft prattle in flatteries of the night, while I would delude myself into being the delight,—the choicest, chiefest possession —of the man I loved. I pined, wasted with a soft oppression at my heart, in fond thought of his

witching form—his heaven-descended aspect—his bright, bright eyes. And yet it was not that: his virtues were also the objects of my affection; and were his mind not so lovely, methinks, I had not been so lost,—I had not been that feverish, visionary, guilty idolatress, whose daring length of indulgence hath brought her, step by step, to that dark precipice, over which her lightning soul now hovers, ere it vanish, ere the night of the tomb involves her in its shadows.

"The course of my narrative has now led me to the era of that crime, which makes the dreadful burthen of this confession. My pen trembles,—my heart fails me,—shall I go on? Oh my dear father-land! shall I expose thy regent's blood-guiltiness? Shall I hold up to the light of day, his treasonable practices?—his!—Martinuzzi's? Is there no way of shunning this penance, merciful Jesus! Be still, my dying soul!—*I will not.*—Let me perish—if so it seemeth meet to Heaven—but George's fame is dear to me, as my own salvation. God knows well, and I can conceive how circumstances,.... the lapse of a minute, which churchmen vainly pretend distains, with irreversible dyes, the white radiance of our immortality—I do not believe it;—'tis a libel on the goodness of that Power, who spake the soul into being. Oh, he was heavenly in his aspirations! And who knows but the false lustre of a diadem?—no, no, it was not *that*;—enough, the Great Spirit, to whom all hearts be open, sees what was his plea—by what casuistry he fell, though I do not. He takes in, as I do, the whole bright tenor of Martinuzzi's life; and if he visit, in his justice, this single, isolated blot, it will be by a proof of the infinity of his mercy. And shall I deal with the man of my heart, more hardly than doth his Maker? The spirit of faith, and a love of fame, went hand in hand with Martinuzzi. The fulness of the one, he will partake in heaven. Oh! why should Alicia rob him, of his inheritance upon earth? No, come what may, hereafter, I

write no farther; and this memorial shall perish with me." * * *

[*Here there was a break in the manuscript.*]

"I again take up my pen. The monk, I expected, hath been with me. Under the seal of confession, I have lodged in him, as tremendous a secret, as penitent ever confided to holy church:—he hath prevailed upon me, to write on; and hath pledged to me His salvation, that, as long as Martinuzzi sees the light, the secret of this manuscript shall never be divulged; nor after, to the detriment of the Lady Czerina, and unless the very existence of my native country depend upon its publication. Such a contingency can, hardly, lurk in the womb of time. I *will* write on. The ministering offices of the holy man have subdued, while they soothed, my violent nature;—there he sits, waiting for me to complete my allotted task, and consummate, at once, the token of my repentance, and the evidence of my crimes. His face is draperied in his cowl; his hands are clasped, as in prayer. Was that his sigh? 'Twas like the moan of a breaking heart. His voice had a strange fascination over me;—that man must be good. I never, before, felt my nature so awed, and softened, by any human being, save by *him*. 'Tis well, at this fearful hour—was that a sigh, or a sob? So,—that being shall have his way. Reason and love, both advise me to be silent: but fate will wrench the secret from my heart,—albeit in agony. Yes; I must write on.

"It was about the time, that Isabella promised an heir to King John, that the princess discovered herself to be enceinte. This event naturally proved the source of intolerable anxiety to Beatrice, whose mind, as I before observed, never recovered its original tone. That obligation to secrecy, she was under, and the difficulty, which her present condition made such concealment be attended with, terrified and overwhelmed her. How was she to hide her situation from all observers? What

would be the lot of the innocent being, she was about to introduce, under such unpromising auspices, to the hard and harsh theatre of existence? Many were our consultations upon the subject, and bitter the tears she shed, upon my sympathizing bosom. At length, however, it was agreed, that, for some weeks, antecedent to her accouchement, she should confine herself wholly to her chamber, under pretence of indisposition. A strange female gipsy, named Unna, was introduced, by Martinuzzi, and was domiciled in the palace, in the capacity of her nurse. There was a mystery, in the relations of Martinuzzi with this woman, that I never rightly could understand. She was an unaccountable being, at once mystical and familiar. She seemed to possess a metaphysic acumen, similar to that I was endowed with, and could fathom the thoughts of all, who came within the sphere of her observation, but was unapproachable herself. I had not been long subject to her skill, ere she plucked out the heart of my mystery, and, by her looks and expressions, gave me reason to believe, that she read my passion for Martinuzzi.

"And now the eventful hour, that was to give a prince to Hungary, was rapidly drawing nigh. The princess had, early, recommended to Isabella, the services of Unna; and at the period of King John's departure from Buda, it was arranged, that the gipsy attendant of his sister, should be the queen's midwife. It so chanced, not many hours before the queen's being seized with the pains of labour, that the Princess Beatrice gave birth to a girl. I and Unna were alone privy to the secret of the babe's existence;— she was confided to my care. The newborn infant was asleep, and I was hanging over her, seeking to trace in her minute and unformed lineaments, a resemblance to her too-beloved sire, when Unna abruptly rushed into the room, where I was seated. Her features were inflamed,— her eyes, at all times wild and

dilated, now glared with an expression, too mighty for concealment. She peered into my face an instant, without speaking. I was struck, I believe, with visible terror, and with difficulty inquired after her grace.

"'The queen is delivered,' replied Unna, in a voice of hollow potency.

"'And her child?' I would have said, but the sounds faltered on my lips, for the gipsy produced the infant, looked at it for a second, then turned her gaze on the unconscious innocent, I hushed on my lap, and finally fixed her eyes on mine, with a significance that, were I to live for ages, would never be obliterated from my memory. It did not require my long acquaintance with the symbolical language of the human countenance, my deep insight into the hidden thoughts of others, to read the terrible meaning of that glance;— her purpose was there written, in characters of fire; respecting her motive I pretend not, even yet, to form the remotest conception. I turned away my encountering gaze, like one scorched to the soul.

"'Alicia Swartz,' said the gipsy, after a minute's mutual and portentous silence, 'you would not, I am persuaded, suffer the offspring of George Martinuzzi, to pine throughout the pilgrimage of an obscure and unhonoured life, when it rests with you, that she should rank the foremost in the land.'

"'What do you mean?' I said, though I apprehended her too well.

"'This male infant is the queen's,' returned Unna, who is yet unconscious of his birth; every attendant is, for the instant, occupied about her grace's person. Then take the boy, and give me the child of Martinuzzi, to make a queen of.'

"She presented me the infant to exchange, I drew back with a mute gesture of dissent.

"'You will not!' presently exclaimed Unna. 'I warn

you, I act by the princess's authority. How will you answer to her, when she shall demand the motive of your refusal ?'

" I believed that the gipsy spoke truth. What she said, explained the nature of her long and frequent private conferences with the king's sister, and accounted for certain mysterious hints, let drop by Beatrice, which, at the time, had exceedingly troubled me, and baffled my curiosity. 'And how,' I rejoined, after a short pause, 'were I, as you would have me, to become an accomplice in this dishonourable deed, could I ever dare confront Martinuzzi ? — What reply could I make him, when he shall ask me for his child ?'

" 'By obeying the princess herein, you will simply be acting in accordance to his wishes,' replied Unna.

" It is false ! I exclaimed, indignantly, Martinuzzi knows nought of this treachery. Away, woman ! — you tempt me in vain,—I stand betwixt my country and treason — between George and infamy."

" ' *George*,' said Unna, with a sarcastic emphasis, on the Christian appellation, 'knows better than you can, what is for the advantage of his country ; and his honour may safely rest in his own keeping ; but there is no time to waste on silly scruples. Peruse this order, girl, and judge for yourself, what are the wishes of the Bishop of Waradin in this regard.'

" She held out to me a paper. I snatched at it, and read the following words: 'Dear Alicia, state-affairs will require my presence at Pesth during this and the following day. You will not prevent Unna doing with the infant, according as she will explain to you ; however the circumstance may surprise, it has been long in the contemplation both of Beatrice and myself, and you will perceive, on reflection, how such a course must operate to the child's ultimate good. GEORGE.'

" I read this note. I dashed my hand across my eyes, to wipe away my blinding tears. I re-read it, and exa-

mined the characters closely. I could not be mistaken — it *was* George's writing. I tore the paper to bits. 'Do the bishop's bidding!' I suddenly exclaimed, with bitterness, at the same time making the fatal interchange of the children. Hardly had I received within my arms the son of John of Zapola, ere Unna quitted the chamber. Oh, the anguish of those tears, wrung from the heart, by the reluctant conviction of the unworthiness of one we love! Not if an angel had descended from heaven to declare it, would I, a minute before, have credited such dishonour of Martinuzzi, and now, I had his own handwriting to attest the reality of his guilt. But his least wish was to me law — it was past — it was too late to be repented — to be remedied. I had consummated for him the crime, he had dared to conceive. I, who, next to my love for George, hugged to my heart the warmest, strongest feelings of loyalty and patriotism, became, by a single act, a traitor to my country and my king. It was not, until I recovered from the first paroxysm of my grief at Martinuzzi's crime, and at that, into which I had been myself surprised, that I recollected that my brother Luke would know, that the royal boy I then held, could not be the same babe that he beheld, only the hour before, sleeping on my lap. The distinction of sex must inevitably disclose our conspiracy; the thought was torture, and I needed it not, Heaven knows, to add to my wretchedness; but what was to be done? I sent, in all haste, for Unna to come to me; it was some time before she could be spared from the sick chamber. In the interim, my brother had stolen, unannounced, into my room. I raised my eyes, and beheld him gazing, with astonished and aghast visage, on me and the little changeling by my side. By what intuition I know not, but a single glance appeared to give him a knowledge of the transposition, that had been effected. He charged me with the deed. I was ever a bad hypocrite; my agitated voice and embarrassed manner effectually betrayed me. Luke

had just succeeded, in extracting from me the truth, when Unna entered. I told her, by what accident my brother had become cognizant of her meditated treason. She started, fixed her dark and penetrating eyes on Luke; adjured him, by every motive of self-interest, to conceal his knowledge of the matter, and accede to our conspiracy. I joined my entreaties to the gipsy's, reminding him, what monstrous ingratitude it would evince, to be the cause of destruction to the man, to whom we both owed our lives.

" ' And think,' subjoined Unna, ' what prospects the patronage of the princess, and the rewards of Martinuzzi, must open to your ambition.'

" ' Ay,' repeated my brother, in a strange and hollow voice, ' the patronage of the princess !'

" The sardonic smile, which accompanied these words alarmed me ; it confirmed me in my opinion of a certain matter, I had often before suspected, relative to my brother, to which I need not, and, therefore, will not make further allusion in this place. Unna noted it also, and, by being possessed of his secret, became master of his destiny. To my great relief, and somewhat to my surprise, Luke eventually yielded to our arguments, or our solicitations. Two days afterwards, the Bishop of Waradin returned to Ofen.

" As a mother might mourn over the tomb of her only-begotten child, had I bewailed the dereliction of Martinuzzi. I could not bear to see him, at that time; my grief was too fresh. I dreaded his company; in the privacy of my chamber I secured myself from his approach. Meanwhile, I knew that he and Unna, and my brother, had frequent conferences. He would hold long discourses with Beatrice, and when he left her, she would weep and lament for hours.

" One day, Luke came to me, bearing an order from Martinuzzi, who was at Pesth, that I should deliver the king's son, into his hands. From the manner of my

brother, in acquitting himself of this message, a vague and undefined suspicion of something wrong arose in my mind. I regarded him with a steadfast eye.— 'What,' I demanded, 'are you about to do with the babe?'

"He made answer 'That he was commissioned by the bishop, to convey the child to the care and keeping of a valued friend of his, residing in Transylvania.'

"Still I misdoubted some deception; I scarcely knew wherefore; but I did doubt. 'Are you telling me the truth, Luke?' I solemnly asked. He vehemently protested that what he had affirmed, was the fact. I had no pretence or authority to question him further. With a misgiving heart, I consigned over to him the son of John of Zapola and Isabella,..as goodly an infant as needed to be seen. He was marked on his left shoulder with the stain and impression of a mulberry. I never saw him more. An hour or two afterwards, Unna interrupted my solitary meditations.

"'I shall leave Buda to-morrow,' said she.

"'So soon?' I replied, in some surprise.

"'Ay!' she exclaimed, in a tone of triumph, 'the object of my coming is accomplished.'

"I believe Unna gathered my wonder from my eyes; for she added, after a moment's hesitation, 'The child of Martinuzzi shall sit upon the throne of St. Stephen,— and the first king of Hungary, who, since Ladislas, hath dared refuse, to ratify the passport of the Bishop of Fünfkirchen, to Thomas Polgar and his descendants, shall rue, in the blood of his child, the vengeance of a Cygani.'

"'The blood of his child!' I repeated, gathering my stifled breath, in an agony of undissembled horror.

"'Even so, girl,' returned Unna. 'Think you that Martinuzzi turns traitor by halves? Learn that Luke Swartz, by his order, will put that boy to death, ere yonder pale crescent shall have this night reached her meridian.'

"The words I would have framed, came from my lips in an imperfect murmur, and I tottered to a chair, and

fixed my glazed looks upon the gipsy, who met my glance with a smile, that curdled my blood.

" ' But not to the Bishop of Waradin, or your brother,' continued Unna, ' whisper your knowledge of this treason. Enough ; it suits my ends, that you are cognizant of it; be dumb to them, mute for ever more — to all others I know you will — there rests a spell upon your lips, you cannot burst through — fine and impassible as air, but strong as seal of adamant : that spell, I need not say, is LOVE. Such fantasies, as such a passion can afford a virgin, *till she dies*, are yours, so I leave you to your sick dreams, child, and to remembrance.'

" Saying these words, Unna quitted the room. Let me not double the pangs of death, by renewing, even in thought, the drooping despondency, the sinking of the spirit, which, for months after the foregoing disclosure, weighed me down to the grave — I never recovered the shock. Fierce, indeed, was the havock, which the idea of George's unworthiness made with my constitution ; it helped to wing that pityless shaft, which my conviction of his merits, had first elanced. At this distance of time, the recollection of that hour's agony, is as fresh, as the woe of yesterday. Ever since, from the hectic languor and other symptoms, mostly incident to my matin hour, have I felt the powers of life rapidly decaying away. Why should I over again detail the nature of my love for Martinuzzi ? I have said, that it made me a deliberate and sedentary suicide ; but it was his falling off, from how bright a sphere ! that helped to barb the dart, or, rather, dipped it in a poison, more fatal than that of the Lernæan hydra. It was his dereliction, that gave the last and poignant sting to the wound, that is destined to lay me low. I have little more to add. I was with the Princess Beatrice, when she was struck by a chance shot, in a pretended attack on our retinue, in the forest of Belivar. I, subsequently, nursed and attended her highness, during the lingering illness, and incurable

loss of reason, consequent on that event. It is not long since, Martinuzzi had her conveyed from my care, to the citadel of Hermanstadt. And I, Gracious God! I was abandoned,..left an outcast among a strange and uncouth race, to perish. All but that, I could have borne — and even that, is not without its solace. That I should be separated from Martinuzzi, ere I died, is, indeed, an unlooked-for evil; but it is the last — it forms a fit period to my dreamy and unsubstantial life, that the playmate of my infancy, and the instructor of my childhood, and the dear unconscious murderer of my maturer peace, should leave me, unfriended and alone, to glut the ravenous maw of insensate death, with the no infrequent, however unheeded, offering of a broken heart.

ALICIA." *

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Slowly, and lost in thought, rose the royal lady — the momentous manuscript dropped from her hands unconsciously. Every syllable of the *celibataire's* confession had been gone through, without her having moved a limb, or stirred from the settee, where she had hurriedly cast herself, on first entering the room.

We feel, that any language, within our humble reach, must sink under the endeavour, to convey to the reader Isabella's state of mind, and the agitation of her various feelings. Her mental vision, like the corporeal vision of a drunkard, staggered to and fro, under the confused and intoxicating sense of what she had just learned. The triumphant malice, with which she recurred, in thought, to the heaped-up measure of her "wrongs unredressed, and insults unavenged," † and contemplated, in near perspective, that dire retribution which, her mind had long been predictive, would one day be hers, defies the feeble skill of the writer of this tale to depict, with

* The death of Alicia was related in the Eighth Manuscript.

† Wordsworth.

any thing like the accuracy, he would wish, or the force of colouring, he deems requisite. It is, indeed, in such passages as we have now in hand, in the probing and anatomising the elements of the soul, which such creations as that, we have attempted in Isabella, impose upon the author, that he finds it hard to realise and embody his own conceptions, and is compelled (as in every other part of his performance) to leave much to the indulgence, and refer much of the illustration, which might be produced, to the imagination of whoso shall honour him, by glancing over his pages, . . "si qua latent, meliora putat." The utmost he can pretend to achieve, is sometimes to suggest ideas to an imaginative and liberal-minded reader, rather than to express them :—

> " His apprehensive judgment will conceive,
> Out of the shadow we can only show,
> How fair the body was." *

The queen's hatred of Martinuzzi hardly admitted of augmentation, but it was with something like joy, that she learned, that those indignities, which his politic ambition had ventured to inflict upon her, in the face of the world, were as a feather in the balance, compared to that long-hidden and villanous injury, which the confession of Alicia brought to light. The ample justification, which she thought, she there discerned for the deed she meditated, was as rivets to her steeled design, and made her look upon the assassination of the regent, as an acceptable sacrifice to Heaven. The assurance of Martinuzzi's treason, by showing how ill-founded was the secret suspicion, that would at times intrude, that her enemy scarcely deserved such intensity of hatred, lightened her very heart ; but there was one point, incidental to the matter of Isabella's meditation, in which, more than aught else, she exulted. It was not merely from her gratification, in being free to hate her rival—it was not,

* Fletcher.

great as she found the relief, the liberation of her pent-up antipathy to Czerina,—feelings "subdued and cherished long," and now set afloat in full tide, by the discovery of the close relations, subsisting between Martinuzzi and our heroine;—no—her exultancy arose from the unhoped-for, and exquisite refinement of that revenge, she had so long suspired, and which such a discovery enabled her to take, upon her perjured lover. To commission the hand of Antoine Ferraro to murder, in the usurper of her son's dignities, the father of that hated girl, for whose sake he had proved false to her!—it was a retribution so complete, so accurately apportioned to the nature of his crime, that even Isabella, wounded as she had been in every point, where her soul most lived along the nerve, found the joyous anticipation outweigh all, she had been made to endure. She felt, that she breathed again, and that the Egyptian darkness, which had long covered her with its pall, had sunk away into "a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand." How did she then congratulate herself, on that anxious and prophetic feeling, which had prompted her to re-assume the habiliments of Ferraro on the second night, as, on the previous one, she had apparelled herself in them, from his absolute inability, in his inebriate condition, to wait upon Piadena. By no other chance, could she have forestalled that information, which, if indeed, as was otherwise inevitable, it had reached the ears of Ferraro, must have for ever frustrated her bloody ends. But she knew, that affairs could not long continue in the state they were, and apprehended, that it behoved her, to assure the success of her practices, by precipitating them. Pereny had signified his intention of waiting personally upon her on the following day, to communicate those important circumstances which, happily, her good genius had already possessed her of. After their interview, he would indubitably seek his son, whose discovery of the parentage of Czerina could not be much longer prevented. It only

remained, therefore, so to take her measures, that the blow be struck in the interim. This seemed no feasible matter. Isabella took several turns in the chamber; she stopped, and thus soliloquized aloud.

"What was 't, I overheard the traitor whisper his daughter? To-morrow, at noon — in her chamber! So, so — I've long since sentenced this ambitious priest to execution; and now! — ay, so be it! *That* be the time and place, to seal my righteous anger on his heart!"

## MANUSCRIPT XXXI.

*ἀντί δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν*
*πληγὴν τινέτω.* ΧΟΠΦΟΡΟΙ.

That same night, or rather morning, for midnight had long passed, Isabella sought the ante-chamber, which had been destined to Ferraro's imperturbable repose. Sound, indeed, and deep and lasting, beyond natural rest, proved the captive's sleep, in consequence of the strength of the potion, which he had so inconsiderately quaffed. The sun rose, and was past his meridian, ere his lethargy began to wear off. The queen took care to be at hand, and, after some brief and troubled discourse, she had the satisfaction to see him sink once more, under the influence of the medicated draught. The sound of the key, turning in the lock of his room-door, roused him anew from this lethargic and unnatural slumber. Isabella's object, in his detention, being fully attained, she approached his couch with some slight refreshment; and, without acknowledging the stratagem of her having drugged his wine, or explaining any part of her subsequent machinations, she proceeded to whet his irresolute purpose, against the life of Martinuzzi, by every subtle incentive, which the malevolence of her wit could suggest. In the end, she engaged Ferraro to discuss with her the necessary preliminaries, in the course of the fol-

lowing forenoon, and on her departure, tacitly restored her captive to his liberty, by omitting to shut the room door, after having previously deposited his garments by the bed-side, not greatly the worse for wear; without which act of restitution, indeed, he could scarcely, in decency, have availed himself of the opportunity of retreat.

Then Isabella retired to her own couch, but not to repose. Her brain was too loaded with wild and swelling thoughts—too rapt with the incredible intelligence she had lately obtained, and the hoarded vengeance she hoped to gratify on the forthcoming morrow. With the first ray, that brightened the grey clouds of the east, she was startled, from her state of feverish restlessness, by war-cries, and trumpets sounding to arms, and the thunder of artillery, pealing at no great distance. The whole city was aroused from the same cause. It was whispered, amid a confused medley of surmises, that certain Wallachian freebands had made a sudden *hourra* on the capital during the night, and now scoured over the neighbouring plains—their encampment was already established without the walls. They were said to be commanded by the Vilez Iwan, who, on the overnight, had despatched two successive flags of truce to the regent, which were refused admittance within the gates. The public ear was stunned by all sorts of exaggerated and tortured reports, which pointed to an approaching storm, and stifled rumours began to circulate through the city, that Martinuzzi was to be compelled, by Turkey, to lay down his authority, and the great Richter to be substituted to the sovereignty of Transylvania, under the protection of the Ottoman emperor, who was encamped within a few miles of Hermanstadt, at the head of immense forces.

While the public mind was in this feverish state, pieces of intelligence got wind, between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, which revived, amongst the inhabitants, all their original unlimited faith in the paramount genius of Martinuzzi. It was rumoured, that, in the

dead of the preceding night, the regent had issued from the city, at the head of certain of his choicest troops, and making a flank movement upon the Wallachian camp, the Richter had been taken by surprise; and, after a sanguinary, but vain resistance, had suffered a signal defeat.

The daring spirit of the prelate, in thus sallying forth, struck every one with admiration. Recalling his former exploits, they readily credited this last achievement, the truth of which was presently confirmed by a long roll of musketry, announcing the warlike cardinal's triumphal entrance, with only a small escort, through the barrier of Hermanstadt. His army had camped some miles from the city, but he was followed by his wounded veterans, and accompanied by the trophies of his victory, which consisted of the enemy's baggage, ammunition, and several standards, intermixed with vast numbers of prisoners, including the Richter Iwan himself, and many of his principal captains.

Meanwhile, we return to Isabella, who started from her unquiet bed, and, pale with anxious passions, hurriedly arrayed herself at early dawn, and went forth from her chamber, to be greeted with some of the wild rumours, we have glanced at above. Musing, she traced back her irregular steps, when, all of a sudden, the thought crossed her, that Ferraro was not likely to sleep through the din and uproar, which had roused the rest of the palace, and that thus her projects might yet be thwarted, by a chance-meeting between him and Pereny, occurring before the irremediable deed was done. Indeed, had any such cross accident intervened, it must have materially altered the catastrophe of our narrative. Isabella quickened her movement, and hastily passed into the apartment, which had been converted into the prison of Ferraro. The room was vacant! She felt troubled, and at a loss how to act. Ferraro had fled. She was tolerably confident, he would not fail the appointment he had made with her; but, in the interval, what was not in the range of possi-

bilities? He might learn to know his sire—or perhaps, even now, under favour of the general confusion, he had sought the society of Czerina. The thought was wormwood. How did she regret her inadvertence, in leaving the door unbarred, as at a pace, whose trembling defeated its own haste, she sped towards the chamber of her, whom, since her birth, she had instinctively detested, though, until the last few hours, she believed her to be her own daughter! Without a preparatory word, to signify her presence, she burst into the room. The drooping young lady, who was pensively reclining at the further end of the chamber, started up, on the door opening. She was already dressed, at least, if the light and virgin wrapper, she had loosely thrown about her, might be termed being so. The seraphic outline of her features betrayed an expression of mingled surprise, agitation, and alarm. For a second, she appeared undecided, then quickly crossed the apartment, to salute her unwonted visitor.

"Oh, bless you, dear madam, for this!" she exclaimed; "those sounds awakened me, and I 've been greatly terrified. My nerves, I fear, are not as they were. Oh, bless you! bless you!"

The queen shrunk back, from the proffered embrace of Czerina, and looked at her, with a slow and scrutinizing glance. A strange feeling crept over her; — it was the first time she had seen his,.. *Martinuzzi's daughter!* A cold dew from the heart gathered on her brow, and, moving away, her eyes made a curious survey of the apartment. "What would you, wild thing?" dropped chill and slowly from her lips.

"Dear mother!" said Czerina, following Isabella, and looking earnestly in her face, "how pale you are!"

"Mother!" echoed the other, with a frightful smile; "how strange! — Pale, does she say?" continued the queen, more wildly; "ay, I am gone pale with hate, sure, hereafter, I shall blush. — Avaunt! I loathe thy sight!"

The deep blue of Czerina's eyes was begemmed with sudden tears, as, throwing her arms about Isabella's neck, she returned, in mild and piteous accents, " You are not well; alas! you would not say so else."

" Take off thy fangs!" screamed Isabella. — " I would as lief an adder crawled about me! — I would as lief, by heavens! a viper kissed me! Thou art my abhorrence! — pah!" and, saying these words, she roughly extricated herself from the encircling arm of Czerina. Long, and fixedly, she then gazed, or rather scowled, on her, as if she would, that the fabled power of the basilisk were in her breath, and in her glance.

" Oh, what has chanced? what have I ignorantly done to offend?" inquired the poor petrified girl; — " kill me, mother," she proceeded, " but repulse me not so coldly, nor look thus at me; — kill me, rather!"

" *Not yet*," returned the queen, significantly. There was a pause. " Who departed hence, ere I came hither?" she abruptly demanded, in a fierce and peremptory tone.

" Indeed, no soul," replied Czerina.

" You lie, minion!" exclaimed Isabella. " Why dost tremble then? 'Tis guilt — 'tis consciousness — 'tis — pah! I conster thee; so; he went not forth, you say?"

" He!" repeated Czerina; " in mercy, whom!"

" Ha! does it start you? — no matter; well, poor wretch! you shall be his bride—*some time to-morrow*."

" His? whose? — Oh, unkind!"

" His! whose! — I see thou triflest with me; — 'twere safer to play with lightning. Take heed, white fool! if I detect thee in an inward laugh, by my eternal wrongs! I'll stab thee straight, and throw away my hopes upon the paltry vengeance, so I may be sure thou'rt dead. — What devil hast thou?"

" Oh, why are you so angry?" sobbed Czerina, the tear ebbing insensibly from her eyes. Her figure had

so fallen away of late, that she looked, rather like the waxen model of a corpse, than flesh and blood.

" I ask, what doth make thee shudder, emaciated thing ?" inquired Isabella, after a pause, her eye sternly resting, at the same time, on the angelic countenance and aërial shape of the appalled maiden.

" If I tremble, 'tis at thee, — you look so dreadfully," replied Czerina.

Isabella turned away. Half unconsciously, half eagerly, she threw open a leaf of a closet, near which she stood, closed it again, and said, with bitterness, " I should be blind, and never see such things ; send for him back, — I'll not intrude."

" My brains are dulled, and I know not what you think," interposed Czerina, in a gentle voice.

" Do you not so, my very youthful interloping madam ? — I'll lighten thee then, meek thing ! thou art a wanton. Ha, start ! — but tell me now—in secret, — be sure I'll blab not, — has not a certain handsome secretary, a likely man enough, I own too ; nay, be not strange with me, I've said I'm close ; and if (such things will chance) a whisper gets abroad of amorous doings, I'll hush thy pleasures up, as men do murders."

Czerina shivered, and grew even more corpse-like than before, as though the blood had, indeed, all descended from her cheek to the labouring heart. She made no reply.

" Well, puny wench," proceeded the queen, after a pause, " you have not told me yet, what thought drinks up the ruby of thy cheek. Art not a spotted harlot now ? Come, confess, — confess ; — that oil-tongued, cozening, light-o'-love, that — (ruin seize ye !) — thy — pah ! that man ! Ferraro ! — where have you hid him ?"

Czerina's lip could only echo the last syllables. " Hid him !" she murmured, vainly endeavouring to hide her blushes and her tears, by covering her face with hands, too little to serve the purpose of concealment.

"Ay, have ye," and Isabella's voice suddenly faltered, — "Have ye not passed delicious times together, while I lay sleeping — no, tossing through whole, endless sightless, hours, *awake* on my lone couch? — yet what's to me? I 'll know, though; — but that was heretofore — I speak not of it. Hath he not lain at thy feet, within this hour?" and she sent forth a glance, from her dark eyes, as if to penetrate the depths of the damsel's heart,— "and gazed, and kissed thy lip? and took his oath upon thy pantofles? — 'twas wondrous sweet; ay, puling anatomy that thou art! he knows the way, — he can protest, I trow, as high as heaven, — as deep as hell, at will. Hath he not been here, that — that — I want a name by which to brand him; — you know the man I mean."

"Oh no, — upon my soul, no!"

"Stop — strangle that wicked lie upon thy lip, for fear it choke thee, or I kill you. He left the chamber just before I sought you; — he did," she added, and the veins rose upon her temples as she raised her voice to its shrillest, loudest tones, "you know he did."

"I dare swear he did not," meekly replied Czerina; "I have told many hours, and this, the last, here, all alone."

"Ha! ha! why didst thou tremble, then, upon my entrance? — Whom didst thou look to see?"

"The lord cardinal," said Czerina, with bloodless lip.

"How so? *'tis not noon yet;*—though, would it were; for then — so, the lord cardinal — what's he?"

"Methought the sound was Martinuzzi's, and I shook — I ever do, — 'tis fear; but *thou* art my mother, and ——"

"Thou art my fiend!" interrupted Isabella, with a vehement gesture of disgust. "Pah! I am grown deadly sick, — throw wide your casement, girl, — give me some air, — I have a fever on me, and would sit awhile, in the chill dew of day-break."

Czerina opened the casement, as she was directed.

Isabella threw herself on a fauteuil beside it, and leant forth in the dark grey atmosphere of morn. The unhappy girl stood, or rather crouched, near, her heart swelling with a variety of conflicting emotions. The roar of firing in the distance was quick and heavy, and became distinctly audible.

"Hear ye that peal?" cried the queen, with dilated eyes and expanded hands. "Again, another, and another! They are no chance bursts, those, girl! but the signal of Heaven's aid to the cause of justice and right, in their last extremity."

Czerina was silent.

After a pause, the queen resumed the colloquy. "These cold regards are pleasant," she said,—"you are to be envied! — *Envied!* ha! ha! — Hast used this chamber long, child?"

"My memory cannot go back to that point of time, I slept not in it."

"Oh, to be sure, I had forgot me; — 'twas here my minion, having fed on mandrakes, dreamed herself away."

The countenance of Czerina blanched to the hue of death, as, casting upon the queen a wild glance of terror, tottered, and caught at the back of a chair, to prevent her dropping to the ground.

"It sounded wondrous marvellous at the time!" continued Isabella, — "all Erdély marvelled at thy wandering o' nights; and well they might, forsooth, thou meagre, unlaid ghost! — but the riddle's read at last."

"My God! what mean you by this tyranny?" exclaimed Czerina.

"Ha! do you wince? — Now could I find it in my heart to — no, my vengeance will not cool with waiting, — how hot 't has grown of a sudden. Your dream is read, child; do you hear me? — read; and the solution is ——"

The quick heaving of our heroine's breast seemed to

convulse her throat. "For pity's sake, forbear me now!" she sobbed, restraining her tears, though the attempt well nigh choked her; — "I'm weak, and faint, and wobegone — and dying." She paused, while the convulsive shudderings, that ran through her frame, evidenced the strength of her emotions. "I pray you," with difficulty, she subjoined, "leave me quite alone awhile, — I pray you, do!"

Unheedful of the poor girl's request, or the faltering accents, with which it was preferred, the queen proceeded, "Are you touched, minion? — Yes, the solution of thy dream is treason,—damned!—brewed in the vaults of Hermanstadt, or, what's the same, in hell!"

Ever since that fatal dream of her childhood, we somewhere told, in the outset of our story, any allusion to it had jarred on the sensitive nerves of the unhappy daughter of Martinuzzi. She herself felt her health undermined, and, from the night in question, ought probably to be dated her extreme physical debility, and gradual prostration of strength and spirits. Her mind seems to have been originally woven of so fine a texture, as to be peculiarly liable to take its colouring, from any casual impression, like unto that, which now shaded, or rather darkened, its delicate fabric. Indeed, the very silence she maintained, in relation to the memorable incident, we allude to, deepened its mysterious horrors, in the solitude of our heroine's heart, till they permanently worked themselves, into the substance of her character. Of late, as, each succeeding day, it became more evident to others, that her frame (like the opening bud fading beneath the canker-worm) was fast wasting into a premature grave, by no chance had there been any allusion to that lamentable circumstance: when, therefore, after such an inexplicable scene, as had just oppressed her spirits, the queen adverted, with abrupt harshness, to her terrible night-mare, she exceeded the further endurance of the tender nature of her victim. Czerina's lips unclosed;

her eyes strained from their sockets; the strings of her heart, already wound up to too great a degree of tension, gave one single recoil, and, clasping her extenuated hands together, she sank lifeless at the feet of her callous tormentor.

Isabella instantly arose, and gazing, with a brief regard of fiendish triumph, on the pale blighted form beneath her, muttered, "Low! *lower yet*, please God!" and, with these words, without another look or syllable, she quitted the room.

The tumult of Isabella's mind, for some hours after the foregoing interview with our heroine, must be left to the imagination of the reader. At one moment, on learning that Iwan was thundering at the gates, she half-determined to abandon her purpose of assassination, and rather to make her appeal to the Diet, which would shortly assemble at Coloswar, and thus, overwhelm the tyrant in the accumulated light, which she thought she could throw upon his treasons. She would have the evidence and authority of the Graf Pereny, and probably of others, and be supported, by the arms of the victorious Iwan, HER SON — the son of John of Zapola — the rightful king of Hungary! But, again, by adopting this latter course, she must forego the exquisite satisfaction of making Ferraro the instrument of his own destruction.

Harassed by conflicting feelings, did Isabella traverse her apartment, as she waited, with restless impatience, the return of Ferraro. It was the same chamber, we attempted to describe in a former chapter, and was held sacred to her and solitude. An apartment adjoining was less private, and thither did messenger after messenger, convey to the queen's ears the contradictory reports, which sprung up on all sides, in endless succession, on that eventful morning. Much of the information of what was transacting, which she received by this means, she had reason to know, however exaggerated, had some foundation in truth. She entertained sanguine hopes,

that the Richter Iwan would shortly dispossess Martinuzzi of his usurped authority; and the march of the Turkish army upon Hermanstadt, tended to throw light upon a passage in an epistle, she had received from Sultan Solyman, a few days subsequent to the battle of Coloswar, wherein he stated, that certain articles of a treaty, he had lately entered into with the Richter Iwan, would incapacitate him from fulfilling the engagement, stipulated between her highness and Abu Obeida, which, combined with circumstances, not uninteresting to her highness, at that time transacting, compelled him, with whatever regret, to decline, for the present, the honour of a matrimonial alliance with the Lady Czerina. This, and other matters of import, passed, like intermingled waves, over the troubled sea of Isabella's mind, and her suspense respecting the cause of Ferraro's prolonged absence, was now rapidly becoming intolerable. Every moment, she looked for the coming of the Graf Pereny, and she dreaded his encountering his son, ere the important blow, which was to rid Transylvania of the incubus, which sat upon her peace, was struck. Besides, the hour was near, at which Martinuzzi had appointed to visit his daughter; he might happen, not to stay in Czerina's chamber, more than a few minutes; so that, unless the sacrificial priest were speedy, the victim, she had devoted to the infernal deities, might yet escape his doom. She gnashed her teeth in impotent malice, at the thought.

"Are the injuries, I have been compelled to endure at the hands of that man, indeed, unavengable?" she murmured. At that moment, she heard one of her confidential attendants enter the outer chamber; she stepped into the room, and, with a look of inquiry, asked those particulars, with which her messenger was charged.

"The regent is not to be met with in Hermanstadt — men say, your highness, he has fled."

"What's that you croak about?" exclaimed the queen, impetuously. "Escaped me!"

Just then, another of her attendants entered.

"Martinuzzi," he said, in answer to a question of Isabella, "quitted the city in the night-time, but not alone."

"Not alone!" burst out the queen, "how can that be?—time is not older by many hours, since I saw her with these eyes. There's some mistake. By which route hath he ta'en his flight?—To the garrison under arms?—Who is in pursuit?"

The above broken sentences were delivered, with all the rapidity of headlong passion. The man endeavoured, but his royal mistress gave him no opportunity, to interpose.

"The regent took with him all the disposable force in Hermanstadt," at length he rejoined, "with the object, as is surmised, of assailing the quarters of the Richter Iwan, and, from the heavy firing, which aroused the city, it is probable that a battle has already been fought."

"The heavy firing!" repeated Isabella, in sudden alarm. "God, sir! the firing has long since ceased?—Why was this kept from me?—which side is worsted?—where is Iwan?—who claims the victory?"

"The report runs, that the Richter Iwan is defeated," returned the man.

"Then report lies, sir!" hotly replied Isabella. "Have scouts been sent forth?—despatch a special courier straight to the Vilez Iwan, with my gratulations—escort him hither—say, I stretch my heart to meet him—do you hear?—What stand you staring for, with those glazed eyes?—Expressionless slave! do your bidding."

"There is a strict watch maintained, by Martinuzzi's orders, upon the walls, to secure against the egress of any one from the city—all passages are intercepted."

"His orders!—the tyrant!—Pray God! his reign soon close! What means that discordant clangor?"

The inquiry was caused by a faint swell of triumphant

harmony, that seemed to rise up to the heavens, interrupted with irregular discharges of artillery, from the high battlements of the city. The reader will perceive, that the same considerations, which swelled most other bosoms in Hermanstadt, with exulting confidence, were, to Isabella, the source of anxiety and terror. The firing lasted only a few minutes, and, as it ceased, another messenger hurried into the room.

"The regent is now making his triumphal entrance, through the barrier," he exclaimed; "he returns attended by a cavalcade of knights. We have gained the victory — the Moldavians have been cut to pieces—the Richter's prisoner."

"Forbear the room," said Isabella, and she motioned the messengers from her presence.

"So, then," she cried, in a deep, low, hollow voice, as soon as she was left alone; "the Fates have conspired with wrong, and bloody tyranny and usurpation,—and 'tis almost vain to struggle longer. Yet, 'tis likely, he'll hold talk with her, as he promised, if only to boast his laurels, o'er my son. Already the grim and ghastly hour of noon peals in the zenith. Where lags Ferraro now? Those acclamations madden me — fools! abject, crouching dastards! Know ye not, the tyrant bears your rightful king in chains? The leprosy that waits on slavery, stick to ye ever! So, now, 'tis clear one must perish,—whether Iwan, or Martinuzzi, stands on the dangerous passage of this hour. Oh! come, Ferraro! Not in that minute, which first beheld our joys, wert thou one half so welcome to my longing soul, as now thou wilt be. Speed to thy assignation, though Cupid hath changed quivers with cold death. Come! I burn, impatient for thy sight. Where art thou?— Antoine Ferraro, where?"

"Here!" shouted the voice of him she called upon; and with maniac visage, dishevelled hair, and apparel all disordered, Antoine Ferraro rushed, wildly, into her

presence. He had been abroad since dawn, and had witnessed the triumphal pageant of Martinuzzi, file in through the city gates. He had joined, through very sympathy, in the piercing acclamations which rent the air, as the conquering prelate, preceded by a slender vanguard of spearmen, moved along to the melodious thunders of martial music. He was on horseback, and in acknowledging the shouts of the people, with graceful obeisance on every side, once, for a brief instant, as he was making his way through the press, the Austrian secretary felt the regent's look settle upon his Spanish hat. Ferraro well knew, that he was noticed, but no light of recognition was suffered to beam in that deep blue eye. The warlike gownsman rode on; the glittering tide of cavalry, which followed, rolled tumultuously towards the gates of the citadel, which received the living torrent; the guns were silenced; the glorious cortége, with their blazoned banners and pennons, flaring against the sun, disappeared; the assembled crowds swept forwards; the rejoicing shouts, and all the clashing clangour of warlike minstrelsy, died away; and the clouds of smoke and dust, left not a rack on the horizon, and still Ferraro continued rooted to the spot. It was some time ere he turned away, and, in moody abstraction, sought his apartments. He had hardly entered, when he received a written order from the Marquis of Piadena, forthwith to perpetrate the act of justice, to which he was pledged, if he would not have his lovely guerdon assigned over to a more adventurous, if not more devoted lover. The idea was distraction, but no less so was that of the possibility, of his stooping his noble nature so low, as to become an assassin. Hot, reckless, and insensate, he issued forth, and traversed the city, without any object, with a hurried and impatient step. At length, about mid-day, by an accidental glance of the eye, he found himself, at the gate of the palace. Heedless of what he did, he entered,

and rushed into the anti-chamber of the queen, in the mode and temper, we have already described.

"What's this, Ferraro?" began Isabella, in a gentle voice. "Hath aught chanced, since we conferred together? Speak,—your looks are wild."

"They better suit my thoughts, which are literal hell," replied Ferraro. "Your evil words, last night,—the evil suggestions, you left behind with me, rack me to torture; my bosom heaves against a dreadful curse, deadlier than nightshade."

"Nay, be a man," said Isabella;—she approached closer to him, and took hold of his hand.

"Dost note," proceeded Ferraro, "in what convulsive sobs I fetch my breath? My heart is sick, I tell you. My brain whirls round; this hour seems sable midnight to my eyes; within my ears perpetual noises hiss, like to the multitudinous clamour of the damned, over their orgies. I have been subject to a spell. What witchcraft is't?—tell me."

"Come, come, Antoine," said Isabella, in soothing accents, "be more temperate."

"How can I," cried Ferraro, wildly, "when there blaze these torches round my brain, lighting me onwards, to the dizzy brink of some tremendous precipice?—to feel how I am hastening to destruction, and yet have no strength to turn aside! And must my moth-like soul rush on the blinding sun-beams thou hast gathered, to scorch it into cinders? I am sure thou art more pitiful; devise some different task,—is there not one for me, but this?"

He ceased, and stood erect, but tottering; his hands were clenched, his eyes blood-shot and wandering, his countenance deadly pale, save one single and burning spot of crimson, that tinged his cheek. Isabella looked at him steadfastly, but remained silent.

"Nay, nay," added Ferraro, after a pause; "I see, thou'lt not insist that I do this murder."

"No, i'faith," replied Isabella; "because the term's a lie; the positive times are wiser in their ends,—they ask for blood,—his blood, whose sceptre makes their shame,—his, who aspires to have his life their history. Call not that act, which is the angel of God's wrath, a murder. Methinks those sounds, which woke all Hermanstadt from their deep sleep, this morn, might prompt a man like thee, whose bosom swells, or should, with the blood of Pereny, what befits him, when his country lies prostrate at the foot of usurpation. Methinks, my indignation, were I thee, and not as dull as the very floor you tread on, could ill brook this day's disgrace, and feel myself unhonoured in the land of my sires; and her I loved transferred over, by the crowned tyranny of one, born in Croatia, into the arms of my rival. If I would not sink into the centre of the globe, to hide my shame, were I that dastard!"

Ferraro, on whose jarred and perturbed feelings, the appeal of Isabella made small impression, stood mute and immovable.

"Why dost bend thy gaze on the blind earth? Hath deafness smitten thee?" presently demanded Isabella, with some heat; "or is it ——," the discourse was here interrupted, by the sound of some one entering into an adjoining room. Breaking off in the midst, she passed behind the tapestry, and carefully closing the door, descended to the apartment, which communicated with her boudoir, by means of a small detached staircase. She was informed, that a noble cavalier, who gave himself out for the graf, Peter Pereny, was at the palace gates,—he had come, he said, to request a private interview with her highness."

"And he shall have it," said the queen, "that is, presently. Usher the noble graf into the reception room." The man was on the point of withdrawing, when Isabella added; "Stay,—a word. There have been no presents to the palace, from the lord regent, since his proud en-

trance into Hermanstadt? ha! none sir? To his—his,—I would say, to the Lady Czerina?"

"None, madam, to my knowledge," was the reply.

"Sir, have you seen him?"

"Whom, gracious queen?

"Why, the lord regent, man."

"No, your highness. But as I stood at the gates, not a minute since, I was frighted to behold his eminence's confessor, some few paces off, slowly approach the palace."

"Indeed?—hem!—Well, see to the noble Count Pereny."

Isabella, who, on a memorable occasion, had extracted from the lips of her inebriate paramour, the fact of the black Scipio and Father Dominick, being one and the same individual; and who since was apprised that the African was no other than the Graf Pereny, almost instantly surmised the truth,—he, who approached in the garb of the confessor, could not be Pereny, because Pereny was at her door. Who then could he be? Isabella guessed, he could be no other than Martinuzzi himself. "So," she muttered to herself, when the man had left the room, "He comes forth, robed in serge, to show his pride and power within these walls, and wists not of the silent melancholy chamber,—the shadowy court he'll grace, when he goes hence." She returned into the inner room.

Ferraro was standing in the same spot, where she had left him, when she quitted. He had not moved a limb,—and that noble form, now wrecked and defaced by mental tortures, remained in a fixed and absorbed attitude; his mind was wandering, for relief, under the pressure of exquisite suffering, in those visions, which only deepened and refined his sense of woe. It was the breathless hour of noon. All around was still, like the stillness of dreadful preparation. Isabella walked up to Ferraro,—he neither noted her absence or approach. She laid her hand gently on his shoulder.

" Art thou a man?" she demanded. The accents of her voice thrilled in Ferraro's ears, and roused him from this mental stupefaction.

" No," he replied fiercely; " a most rare villain!—a strange disease, (be warned!) which some think madness: 'tis catching, like conspiracy. Now that is well,—avoid me, for I burst."

" Explain thyself, Ferraro, wouldst thou wed, or not, with Czerina?"

Ferraro made no other reply, than by covering his face with his hands.

" Be it at your pleasure, sir," proceeded the queen haughtily; " receive, here, however, the sanction, or rather the grant, of the Marquis Piadena." She held out the paper, she had surreptitiously obtained from the ambassador of Austria.

Ferraro shook his head, and turning away, paced the floor in violent agitation.

" Nay, nay, then 'tis likely, I'm to blame," observed Isabella, with ineffable scorn ; " and your light love, even as an early and unusual plant, hath perished o' the countenance of the stars;—mankind are privileged to shift affections!"

" What would you have me do?" abruptly demanded Ferraro.

" Art thou grown blind, that I must answer you?" exclaimed the queen passionately; " why the veriest clod, having such cause knocking against his heart, would be more apt ——; besides, I've spoken."

" Let me hear thee again," cried Ferraro; " and show more argument. I'll prove a docile listener,—do not doubt it." The queen's fine countenance darkened into an appearance, at once terrible and beautiful, like the glittering scales of the coiled and venomous serpent.

" This is beyond belief," she muttered, in a low vexed voice, and moved away. " I've lost my labour: the regent will escape, after all!"

Ferraro followed her. "Come, let me hear the cause," he cried. "It is of *death, and* ——." The queen turned suddenly on her former lover, and was on the point of breaking in with some bitter observation, when the words, she would have spoken, were arrested on her lips, as a single, loud, sharp, soul-harrowing cry, repeated in a moment after, in the faint, choked, convulsive, utterance of death, rung with piercing emphasis, through all the palace. The articulate word, "*murder!*" so awfully reechoed, from every projection of the building, seemed frightfully applicable to the dreadful matter, Isabella and Ferraro were discussing.—Thrillingly sunk the shrill sound upon the hearts of both. They looked at one another.—Ferraro shook.

"*Who's that calls murder?*" he asked, in a faltering and hollow voice.

Isabella made no direct reply. She pressed her hand upon her forehead. "How my brain whirls!" she said, in low and quivering accents; "Antoine is right; *'twas* '*murder!*' but why it should be, masters my reason. Do we dream, waking? It were too great a thing else!" She broke off, and retired to the casement absorbed in thought. She threw it open. Her ears caught the loud cheers, with which the giddy populace were hailing the military in the court-yard of the citadel. Sick at the maddening contrast with her own excited feelings, she closed it again. "Can such things be?" she murmured; "yea," she continued, in a slow and solemn voice; "and were I now brain-sick, like to yon pale lord, and not a queen, at soul, as in my title; if I were lightly tempered, and my nerved heart, even like the iron bow of destiny, might not be strung to the utmost, did my intents partake, but in the fraction of a grain, of my sex's nature, they might have touched me. But as I am!—yet it is wonderful!"

"Was the voice human, think you?" breathed, rather

than spoke, Ferraro, without stirring from where he stood.

Isabella turned from the window, and fixing her eyes on him, with a scornful smile, replied;—"To be sure, it was,—how were it otherwise?"

"That's true; and yet," objected Ferraro; "I know not ——. In faith it sounded gloomily, '*murder!*'—you heard it?"

"Surely, and we will learn, anon, the cause," returned the queen, in a composed, if not a cheerful voice.—"In the meantime ——."

"'Tis very strange!" interrupted Ferraro, shudderingly.

"Nay, nay, let us forget it," observed Isabella.

"The horrors of this hour are not to be forgotten,—at least so soon. Doth it not appear miraculous to you?—Forget! I trust I may forget it in my dreams." Just then, an officer of the household entered the ante-room.

"Hither, sir," said Isabella;— he approached, but paused at the door, wan and mute; Isabella clasped her hands convulsively together, and fixed her eyes on his face. "Speak," she screamed, in a voice she found it impossible to control. The man, however, stood apparently confounded.

"The noble graf," he presently began, "who ——."

"Powers of vengeance!" interrupted the queen; then rushing towards the officer, and stooping her person forward to him, she exclaimed; "What of the count?—tell us,—thou falterest. I bid you deliver your news." And saying these words, the face of Isabella took an expression, so full of meaning, and so prophetic of what she was to hear, that the man gazed on her countenance appalled. At all events, for whatever reason, he could only answer with his looks.

"Doth he yet hesitate?" murmured Isabella to herself, in an indrawn voice; "then what a scourge hath hell for

*somebody* at last!—I catch the whole!" And, indeed, as if by an instantaneous ray of inspiration, the truth flashed upon her mind. She paused,—again looked those inquiries, her tongue refused to articulate, and then impatiently demanded, under her breath, whether the graf were dead?

"Alas! too surely," commenced the officer; "and worse!"—here, as if averse to relate, what must be offensive to the sensibility of her sex, he stopped.

"Aught further, sir?" said the queen, with increasing agitation; "do I ask in vain? What's this?—*He* is dead, you say. Aught else?"

"Madam, he has been stabbed to death," answered the man. Isabella gasped.

"Was I inspired! How?—Stabbed! and where?—So,—possibly——, pray you, stand off." Thus saying, and without waiting for an answer, she turned away, muttering: "If I don't give my heart vent, I shall die. Had he done it yesterday, there had been some sense in it, and yet 'twas bold. George! George!" she presently added with a smile, whose bitter ironical expression mocks description; "and was he unto thee, as some god, to be reminded of by the sidereal heavens? Methinks, Alicia, the miscreated hell had hit it nearer!" Again Isabella approached the officer; "I asked," she said, huddling the words so thick upon each other, that her hearer could hardly catch their sense: "Where was he stabbed?—Not in my palace, sir?—And for him that dealt the blow?—Is he known?—Secured?—Have you laid hands on him?"

"Madam," returned the officer, "he has fled."

"Fled! impossible,—where was this? It is not a minute since the graf asked to see us! Good God! will you speak?"

"It was the officer of the guard, madam, who first beheld the corpse."

"Wait that man hither, sir; and hark ye, bid the

guards shut the garden gates,—search for the assassin with all diligence; ay, though he be too mighty for you to name, he must be found and shackled."

The subaltern withdrew. The queen's eyes fell upon Ferraro,—he was standing in a fixed and musing attitude. Astonishment, approaching to stupor, appeared to chain up his faculties. Not a breath or stir gave evidence of existence.

"How now, Antoine Pereny?" said Isabella; "what desperate calmness silences thy soul?"

"'Tis a bloody world this!" ejaculated Ferraro solemnly, and with a deep sigh, that almost amounted to a groan.

"There's mettle in it, sir," returned the queen. "Yet, in sooth, you say not amiss; it is a bloody world, and on its theatre, an everlasting scene of life and death drags forward, furnishing the joys of time."

"And there's no help for it!" remarked Ferraro.

"Trust me, far otherwise, my lord,— but here is my officer. I'll tell you presently."

She moved away to meet the commander of the guard, who stood in the threshold of the door. "Proceed!" she said, after a solemn pause.

"On the staircase leading from the garden," began the man.

"Stay, sir," interrupted the queen; "do you know if the lord regent have left his home, since noon?"

"As I think, no," answered the commander.

"Never think more, then;— how!— villany abroad! and he keep his chamber? Do you credit it?"

"Your majesty!" said the officer, under the influence of no small surprise.

Isabella looked at him sternly. "Pray, you make me understand this matter?" she rejoined, in a calm and commanding voice.

The man immediately proceeded to explain, how he

had found the graf, beside the portals of the palace, weltering in his blood, and in convulsions. His left hand grasped the balustrade, as if, with instinctive impulse, he had caught at it, to save himself, in the act of falling. A near examination discovered two deep wounds;—the last had made a passage to the heart. The dirk which had struck the blow, had not been withdrawn: the graf's sword was not unsheathed. On being borne into the vestibule, he expired almost directly. When the commander first beheld him, no soul but one, was near, save such of the household as the horrid cry of murder instantly attracted to the spot.

"But ONE!—what one?—who? *Have ye that one in irons?*" demanded the queen, with startling rapidity of utterance.

There was a pause, which the officer appeared extremely unwilling to break. Isabella regarded him impatiently, for a few seconds; and then, rushing past him, descended the palace stairs like lightning. The next minute, she made one of a group of awe-struck individuals, who were assembled around the corpse, in the vestibule. She instantly demanded, whether any, besides those present, were near, when they first set eyes on the Graf Pereny? Not a single reply was rendered by the domestics, who looked on each other, with fallen countenances and blanched lips.

"Nor stir, nor answer me? Ha!—but no, I will be calm," said Isabella; and the next moment she repeated her inquiry, with increased vehemence.

Intimidated, probably, by the earnestness of her manner, one of the by-standers stated, though with some reluctance, and pronouncing the dreaded name with a half-whisper, that Father Dominick had been observed, not many paces off, moving along the terrace, in an opposite direction to the scene of slaughter. The speaker added, that it was impossible for the assassin,

whoever he was, to escape, since the sentinels, in obedience to their loud cries, had shut the several gates of the palace-garden, almost at the same instant.

"Well!" cried Isabella, "and who's now in pursuit? Why gape ye still, each man on his fellow, and drop your coward words in such a sloth, thus one after another? Are ye nailed here? Hence!—to drag the caitiff to my feet. I swear to you," she added, in a deep and decisive tone, "that Father Dominick is the villain, who did this horrid deed!"

An indignant murmur followed this announcement.

"Ha! Father Dominick!" exclaimed several of the by-standers, through clenched teeth, and half-closed lips.

"He is,—I arraign him of the act;—or, if not he," she subjoined, with a peculiar and horrible smile, "a thousand crowns shall recompence that man, who dares but name the homicide."

The greater number of those present, stood appalled. Some few, however, slunk away, either in awe of their royal mistress, or else in pursuit of the assassin.

"Why move ye thus, one by one?" exclaimed the queen, passionately. "Fly, every soul of ye! Your duty should outspeed my voice,—I have need of more than millions such, to do me service. Get ye hence,—and track the assassin of the noble Pereny,—seize him!—secure his body, *dead or alive;* if he resists—kill him! And when ye have the murdering dog, bring him before us. Away, away, like thoughts!"

These commands, delivered with that vehemence natural to Isabella, and enforced with uncommon energy of gesture, roused the palace-household, from the stupefaction which previously overwhelmed them. All was instant ferment; several halberts gleamed aloft; and the excited group rushed tumultuously from the spot, with loud cries. The hall immediately became cleared, and Queen Isabella alone remained, in proximity of all

that earth retained, of the once haughty and celebrated Peter, Count Pereny. The queen bent over the murdered man, in silent thoughtfulness. He was lying upon the pavement, on his back. His arms had fallen listless by his side. His vestments were dabbled with gore, and the floor around was flooded with the same. The instrument of death had not been withdrawn from the wound, whence (it was his heart) the deep-red stream of life, still continued to bubble forth. What an inscrutable doom was his! On the very day of his resuming the style and honours, proper to his lineage, to be thus hurled into eternity. And wherefore?—and by whom?—'Twas wondrous strange! His death so curiously timed too;—the moment—occasion—manner,—all pointed but to one solution:—*and that?* "Was he not," mused Isabella, "on the very point of making to me the important communication, he had unwittingly imparted on the preceding night? Would he not have established the truth of his disclosure, by confirmatory particulars, which now the assassin's steel hath sealed in eternal darkness?" That she was already, in a great measure, possessed of the well-nigh incredible circumstance, which Pereny's relation would have unfolded, the murderer, whoever he was, could not guess—*whoever he was!* The promised revelation, involved charges of damning import to one man, in particular. Who, but *he*, in all Transylvania, could have an interest to stifle in blood, the fated breath of him, who was about to lay bare, to the widow of John of Zapola, her mighty injuries? Who but *he*, would profit by the hushing up the evidence of his treasons? Who, but *he*, was on the spot?

The connection between the death of Pereny, and the approach of Martinuzzi, under the guise of Father Dominick, adopted in a moment of extreme and engrossing emotion, afforded a circumstantial evidence of the prelate's guilt, which, even had Isabella been more collected, her understanding would not have allowed her to doubt.

With such thoughts whirling through her fertile brain, did Isabella mutely contemplate the upturned and rigid countenance of the corpse, at her feet;—she stood, like the iron man with ribs of steel, described by Spencer. Neither awe, nor pity, nor compunction touched a heart, indurated, by the searing wrath of woman's jealousy, to the hardness of the nether millstone, and over the ruins of whose every feeling, strode crowned revenge in arms, and cased in triple adamant. Isabella looked not on the casualty, which had just intervened, as an intimation from a mysterious Providence. It scared not her ravenous soul, from hovering in imagination o'er its prey, but rather would have presented an additional incentive to revenge, had she required it. She felicitated herself not a little on the purchase, she had obtained over Ferraro, by the opportune occurrence of his father's murder, and resolved to convert the most hallowed feelings of the human heart, into the instruments of her diabolical purpose;..to make them her prime agents, in effecting the destruction of her fated victims. Intently did Isabella gaze on the lifeless visage, and scan those features, so lately animated, where death, but not natural death, had set his indelible seal. Presently her rolling eye, in freezing intuition, fastened on the hilt of the fatal dirk, whose blade was still buried in the bosom of Pereny; when, through the dark gore, with which it was stained and clotted, she fancied, she descried, in the midst of elaborate chasing, certain minute characters, exquisitely executed in relief;—she peered closer over the reeking spectacle, and then seizing hold of the dreadful instrument, forcibly extricated it from its ensanguined sheath, regardless of the clear fresh stream, which spurted forth at the ghastly opening. Isabella held up the weapon near to her orb of vision. *One single word* was engraved on that hilt, and the exultant expression of inward satisfaction, which kindled meteor and unnatural light through the eyes, and over the pallid face of Isabella, as she

decyphered it, mocks the power of language to depict. For a second, she preserved a fixed and abstracted attitude, and through her closed teeth, audibly drew in her breath; then depositing the crimson dripping weapon beneath her robe, wholly unmindful of the gouts of gore, which stained her hands and linen, with a bent brow, stern and flashing eye, and an appalling smile upon her compressed and tintless lip, the implacable lady left the vestibule, and ascending the staircase, rejoined Ferraro. Upon entering the room, she found him seated on that low ottoman, commemorated in a former manuscript,—his face was half hid within his hands, as they rested on his knees, and he was seemingly wrapped up in meditation, whose very intenseness bordered on stupor.

Isabella glared on him for about a minute, with an eye, expressive of scorn—"Thou ashen slave!" she muttered to herself inaudibly, "Thou struck pale fool! or else,—thou mightst have been—how I once looked upon him!"

Ferraro raised his head—"Madam, may I begone?" he said, half rising from his recumbent position.

"Surely not, Antoine," replied the queen, casting herself beside him; "We will now resume our talk."

"Talk!" cried Ferraro, "how can you imagine it? I cannot,—nor think;—my soul shakes;—prithee, let me begone."

With these words, he again offered to retire, but Isabella impelled him, with gentle compulsion, to retain his place near her. "Nay, Pereny, keep your seat—I have news for you."

Ferraro made no further effort to depart. "I am sick o' the world," he cried, listlessly sinking back on the easy cushion.

Isabella turned to him, and fixing on him a glance, full of earnestness, took his hand in hers, and while her form seemed to dilate before his astonished eyes, she thus, in a deep, solemn and earnest voice, took up the discourse—"You said, but now, it is a bloody world, and you were

right, Antoine,—it is. The slayer and the slain have sat together, in churches, council chambers, and on thrones. 'Tis a deep mystery, my friend, but so it is. Full many men have died, been murdered, struck, sir, and yet no blow been seen for it. We bleed away, with heart strings cut and torn, for who is he, that is not stabbed at the core? Some still writhe on, while life ebbs drop by drop, but, slow or sudden, all die inwardly. There are, ay, trust me sir, there are a thousand wonderous ways to smite*—the wearied, and the heavy-laden own it." The look, the attitude, the voice of Isabella, all concurred, while she spoke thus, to overawe her listener.

"Why this to me?" he said, with faltering accents.

"Because, thou art struck at, yet forgivest it," returned the queen, impetuously. "Thou art wounded, sir, despoiled, stabbed to death; or, if it be not death, those gnawings at the primal seat of life, it is a living torture, which exceeds ripping of veins and poison. Oh, to die, how easy were it, under the weight of human injuries! the great and difficult task is his who dares last them out, who scorns to shrink under fate's strongest strokes, boldly confronts insult and wrong with silence, with heroic patience, and deceptive smiles,—*lives on in torments, but revenges all on't.*" Here she paused, leaning, in her earnestness, so close to her companion, that he felt her breath warm upon his face.

"I stir no more in that we spake of," cried Ferraro, abruptly, "so let it pass."

Isabella looked at him for an instant with a quiet, intent, and steady eye; and then, without noticing what he had just spoken, continued, in a more composed tone, but with no less solemnity than before—"Two characters, throughout all life, play opposite parts—the oppressor and the oppressed. Such is the universal code, and all the common privilege, left to mortals, is a bare

* πολλὰ γοῦν θιγγάνει πρὸς ἦπαρ.—Æschylus.

choice. The brave man at once makes his election, and adheres to it; whilst the ignoble herd still shift their policy, like the inconstant vane, and prove the pains, by turns, of tyranny and of endurance."

"What matters it?" cried Ferraro, with some emotion, "the world is a wide prison, and those that find not, forge themselves the gyves that wear them; but now, something is wrong already; again be wise, and let me depart."

"Well, Antoine," exclaimed the queen, at the same time rising impatiently from her seat, "wert thou enthralled by such gyves thou speak'st of, wouldst not shiver them?—Look up, and answer, man.—Wert thou, Mark Antoine, the oppressed, and thy heart cut through with galling and unlicensed force—didst thou stand rifled here of one thou lovedst,—the golden promise of thy young hopes blasted—wouldst kiss the axe that levelled thee to earth?"

To an appeal urged with such heat, Ferraro hardly knew what to reply.

"To what thy siren voice would urge me on, I guess," he presently began, "but, madam ——"

"Light, wavering man!" interrupted Isabella, her eyes sparkling indignantly, "of what base clay art fashioned? By Heavens! I doubt, the blood that warms thy ignoble heart, would scarce suffice to shape a blush, upon the cheek of a green girl."

"Deem not," said Ferraro, "I purpose to endure that tyranny thou hintest at. But you have forgot, lady, how I have a father, the first of Hungary's nobles, without whose concurrence I cannot stir in this. I will consult *him*. Pereny shall instruct me how to act."

"Marc Antoine Pereny!" exclaimed the queen, in a voice of supernatural grandeur, at the same time motioning her finger, to enforce attention. "Would refer your conduct to your father's counsel, go below—his blood, yet unappeased, will demand of thee a noble ven-

geance; his locked and inorganic jaws will, in the name of God, and of your country, and of all laws, human and divine, command you to be a man!"

Ferraro shuddered. He would have spoken, but several seconds his lips refused their office. "Holy Mother of Heaven!—what mean you?" he at length asked, in a tone of forced and terrible calmness.

"Your root is withered up; Pereny 's dead, and left you for a hatchment — THIS!"—and at the word, Isabella deliberately drew forth the blood-dripping dirk, which lodged in the folds of her garment, and flung it upon the table.

Ferraro started up, and rushing to where it lay, bent, with fixed muscles and ghastly complexion, over the weapon. A deep pause of a minute ensued, ere he found voice. "Whence comes this gory tincture?" he at length demanded, in that tone of congealed horror, caused by those vague and indescribable doubts, which the sudden apparition, at such a moment, naturally suggested.

The depth of the hollow voice, in which the reply was rendered, was like what we attribute to an utterance, not of this world.

"It is from your father's heart, Antoine;—all that remains to earth of Peter Count Pereny, lies stretched in the porch below, on the cold ground. There, feed thy blood-shot eyes, and then turn marble!"

Ferraro was indeed horror-stricken. He recoiled several feet, and then for awhile stood aghast. Frantic with emotion, he presently snatched up the instrument, and, with a maddened voice, said—"Who hath done this? Tell me, if you know, that, ere I lay my father in consecrated earth, I may revenge him."

"Who is 't?—who should it be, but *he?*" replied Isabella.

"Ha! whom?" demanded Ferraro.

"THE REGENT!" was the answer.

"Speak it at large—Cardinal Martinuzzi?"

"*Is there another regent?* If you can doubt my word, read, son of Pereny, what red name's engraven on the heft of the instrument, extracted from thy father's corpse, and spell the will of Heaven."

Ferraro, in freezing obedience, raised the weapon before his glazed orb.—"MARTINUZZI!" he murmured, in half-smothered accents of mingled dismay and horror. There was mutual silence for awhile. It was broken by Isabella.

"'Tis well," she cried, "your funeral tears do turn to fire, to blast the sceptred slayer."

"Mark me, madam!" replied Ferraro; and his stern utterance denoted the strength of his resolution,—"were he ten times regent, and all tortures tyranny e'er invented were let loose upon me for it, he should not sleep another night. The man, who, in such bloody case, takes up the name and title of his ancestors, is bound to express his sorrow, not by tears, but by avenging his father's massacre. The son of Pereny"—and Ferraro's eyes shot fire as he spoke—"will, by the same blow, that requites his private injuries, emancipate his country, from the yoke of a tyrant!"

The deep and steady voice, with which these words were delivered, evidenced the determined purpose of Ferraro's soul, and seemed to evince, that the transports of passion, which had not long before wrought on him, to the brink of madness, were for a time subsided. His feelings were tempered, and, so to speak, solemnized, by the occasion. The dread bolt, just launched forth against his house, roused him to the encounter. He felt, that he stood pledged to the world, that the blood, which flowed in his veins should not be poured forth unrequited, and the anticipation of obtaining that "wild justice," which his honourable and justifiable indignation almost authorized, strengthened his nerves, and induced a train of thinking and feeling, that was most grateful, when com-

pared to his previous irritable condition. It possessed the like soothing effects on the mind, as if, in meditating a nicely-measured retribution, he were acting under the influence of duty.

Ferraro had hardly done speaking, when a dissonant buzz and outcry, that had for some time been gathering in the distance, approached close to the exterior of the palace. Loud voices were heard, exclaiming, "Vengeance on the murderer!"—"Vengeance and Pereny!"—"Vengeance and liberty!"

"Have they laid hands on him?" thought the queen, as she stepped to the casement, and looked forth into the gardens. There, all was riot, uproar, and confusion. Between two and three hundred persons, mostly armed, were seen advancing towards the palace.

"Hark! there is tumult," said the queen. "Let us descend, Antoine, and meet the multitude, to prevent misapprehension. Follow me."

Ferraro did as he was directed. Holding the dagger with a firm and strained gripe, he moved forward through the long ante-chamber, or gallery, to the grand staircase. Thence he made but few steps to the bottom of the flight, and then threw himself on one knee, before the slaughtered body of his sire. At that instant, there was an inburst of several men, through the vestibule, into the spacious and lofty entrance-hall of the palace. Brandishing their arms aloft, with fury in their hearts, and loud vociferations on their tongues, they demanded the murderer of Pereny, to be delivered up into their hands. The origin of this extraordinary tumult, we will now proceed to explain.

The vague dread, which the royal household, in common with every other soul in Hermanstadt, had of Father Dominick, detained those in the vestibule, for several seconds, after the queen had issued her orders for his arrest; but the feeling of horror entertained, at the character of the confessor, was, in no instance, re-

deemed by the slightest particle of regard; and, urged by the natural indignation of men, called upon to assist in the seizing of a murderer, all present entered upon the pursuit of the mysterious father, with right good will.

On their issuing forth into the gardens, the monk was observed moving at a quick rate far down the broad avenue, leading from the palace. The simultaneous command to stop or die, which rent the air, appeared to afford to the object of their hallowed wrath, the first intimation of their being in quest of him. Ere the echo of their voices died away, the confessor had turned aside, from the more open path he before pursued, into an oblique avenue, and was instantly lost to sight.

The palace gardens were of considerable extent, and were bounded, in part, by the royal edifice itself, in part, by the course of the river Zibin, and were elsewhere circumscribed with a broad and lofty stone wall. The officers and retainers, therefore, believing themselves ultimately sure of their quarry, halted to consult on their best mode of hunting it down. Pursuant to their plan of operations, which seemed to ascertain the general safety, if it had little else to recommend it, the whole body divided into small parties, and repaired to opposite points of the compass at the extremity of the gardens. Ensweeping first the intervening distances, they proceeded, at a common signal, to converge in the direction of the palace. Soon they entered upon a portion of the garden, which, according to the taste of that age, was arranged with uncommon care. Arbours, bowers, grottos, now covered with a hoar and crystal foliage; statues, distributed in admired order, presented themselves at every vista. The terraces on this side the platform, just reflected the terraces on the other, whilst repeated flights of steps were made to terminate in the cultivated parterre, or were mirrored in the artificial fountain, whither they conducted.

Certain of the household, to whom devolved the task of scouring this ornamented space of ground, on turning into a cross avenue, found themselves, to their own consternation, within view of the monk. For a moment, to a man, they recoiled; but, confident in their numbers, and acquiring fresh courage, from witnessing the flight of the ghostly assassin, at their approach, with boisterous halloos, they almost immediately resumed the pursuit. This announcement, which shook the welkin, had the effect of accellerating the advance of other of the confederates, and it was not many minutes, ere between twenty and thirty persons were directly on the trail of the fugitive. Every instant, one or other caught a glimpse of his dark and flowing robe, and it appeared inevitable, that he must be shortly brought to bay. Some few bullets were discharged, which ploughed up the ground at his feet.

The party was gradually gaining upon him, when he descended a flight of steps, whence the thoroughfare diverged, at a sharp angle, into two separate paths. Both of these were circuitous, and, sweeping round a broken dingle of some extent, covered with a thick underwood of evergreen, again became united at the base of a corresponding flight of steps, that conducted to the main avenue of the gardens. At this place, owing to the abruptness of the curve, his pursuers lost sight of the monk. On reaching the fork, they divided their small troop, and rapidly measured the distance to the meeting of the paths beyond the dingle, where they ascended the opposite flight of steps, just mentioned.

Having now obtained an extensive range of vision, they could perceive the other parties, hastening from all quarters towards them, but the object of their pursuit was no where to be seen; — they were at fault. Suddenly, a wild cry broke from the dingle of copsewood, the circumition of which we have detailed. They could distinguish fierce exclamations, and, apparently, the jar of angry voices. They turned back, and their

movements were speedily quickened, and their attention attracted to the right spot, by the clashing of swords. It now became evident, that persons were engaged in mortal struggle, somewhere in the midst of that thick underwood. The party of pursuers burst from every direction, through the copsewood that obstructed their passage. Suddenly, the clashing ceased, when, just as the foremost of the party attained a little space of more open level, the monk himself abruptly brushed past him, and, taking advantage of a scarce-trod and devious track, with which the other was unacquainted, rapidly thridded the intervening cover, to the common pathway, and was again, for a period, lost to view.

About the same time, other of the officers of the household arrived at that level before mentioned, and, on looking around, they descried a cavalier, prostrate and bathed in blood, upon the earth, whose splendid accoutrements at once proclaimed him to be noble, and a foreigner. On approaching nearer, with the view of accosting him, it was discovered that he had swooned away. They proceeded to raise him, and, in the act, a fresher colour visited his cheek. His mind appeared to be slowly reviving to a sense of outward circumstances; while, still in a state of demi-consciousness, his eyes seemed to follow some obscure and fleeting object, and broken and energetic expressions escaped from him, at intervals.

"Wouldst marry into royal families?—ha! haughty Hungarian!—one blow!—not dead yet, and I struck so home?—there's to thy heart! proud exile!—go, join Jerome Lascus' child, in—in—in—I tell you 'tis false, I did it not!—Monk! arch dissembler! fiend! ha!—Martinuzzi!—ha! ha! ha!"

Infinitely startled at the import of this mysterious language, which seemed to burst from the wounded man's lips with uncontrollable violence, those, who were witnesses of his half delirious exclamations, accompanied as

they were, with horrible contortions and furious gestures, in accordance with his words, judged it best to convey him beneath the palace roof; and they were the rather inclined to adopt this course, as they presently ascertained, from some of their party, that the object of their marvel was no other than the Marquis of Piadena, some time ambassador, but, at present, prisoner-of-war in Hermanstadt.

From the contemplation of Castaldo's guilty ravings, let us turn our attention to Father Dominick, who, taking an oblique line, towards a small portal in the wall, and stealing a glance over his shoulder, descried more than a score of persons close at his heels, as he gained the gate. In the same breathing point of time, two of his hunters darted along an intersecting path, to cut off his escape. His fate would no longer have been doubtful, but that the person of the confessor was "hedged" with such awe and horror, that these two waited for the co-operation of their comrades, ere they would venture to "act their will." During their momentary indecision, the monk drew out a small pass-key, and applied it to the lock. Owing to rust or disuse, the key turned in the wards with difficulty; still, though they saw his escape at hand, and that more than twenty of his pursuers had come up, not an individual had the temerity to seize upon him. The monk exerted all his skill and force — in vain.

In this emergency of danger, one of the party, bolder than the rest, laid his hand on the door. Instantly quitting his own hold, the monk grasped the fellow's hand in one of his, while, with the other, he half raised his hood. The man uttered a low cry of surprise, at the same moment that the monk, releasing his hold, caused him to stagger back among his confederates, who, in that sympathy of indefinable dread, which (ever since the stratagem of the rustic god,) has gone by the name of

panic,* to a man recoiled. The door opened, and already the confessor was through the aperture, when a general rush (defeating its own object) was made to seize him by his girdle. "Stop, or die!" was uttered, in fearful proximity, to his ears. Despite the command, he slipped the fastenings of the belt, and passed through the opening. Several reeled backwards, holding, in their tenacious grasp, the loosened belt, while the monk flung the door back, and turned the key. Here, however, a yell of fury welcomed him, and he beheld a multitude bearing down upon the spot, from the piazzas of the palace. Fetching a deep breath, he directed his course towards that ruinous porchway, which, in former manuscripts, hath made the scene of our changeful drama, and was not long in reaching the desired haven.

On observing him take refuge in that desolate spot, the multitude set up a triumphant hurrah, conceiving him now at the term of his flight, and utterly in their power. The persons in quest of the ghostly fugitive were not confined to the official retainers of the palace.

Pereny, for some days past, had been recruiting the strength of his partizans against the struggle, which he foreboded, but in which it was decreed, by a higher Power, that he should take no part. His existence had long been secretly known to hundreds; and, during the whole of the preceding night, unmindful of that unerring javelin, that already hurtled in the air, he had been conspiring, with many of the inferior magnats, and other of his adherents, to accomplish the restitution of the crown of Transylvania, to the rightful descendant of John of Zapola.

Alas! where was he the next day? — In that world beyond, where kingdoms and crowns deceive not; where he would know what bubbles they are, which are so

* Polyæni Strateg. lib. i. c. 2.

proudly borne on the floods of time, to be dissipated into the breathless ocean of eternity.

The name of Pereny was a tower of strength. That nobleman was the richest and most illustrious subject in the kingdom; and, notwithstanding the many errors conspicuous in his conduct, the natural partiality and attachment of his vassals supposed, and even magnified, his personal importance. Enough of time had since passed away, to wipe out whatever motives for enmity or rivalship his unstable politics had formerly afforded; and many furious and ambitious spirits now joined, heart and hand, to support the graf in his project of subverting the government, who, in other days, would not have interchanged the commonest terms of courtesy with him. "*Time the mighty, withers wrath away.*"*

The rule of Martinuzzi, though received by those of the lowest rank with eager approbation, was far from giving the like satisfaction to the turbulent and factious aristocracy, many of whom were jealous of the ascendant which he had acquired in the councils of the nation. Their train of conspiracy pointed to the overthrow of his system of government, and the substituting of Iwan to the possession of the vacant dignity. All being prepared, nothing remained but to strike the blow; and the advance of the Richter before the walls of Hermanstadt, was determined on, as the signal of explosion. But all the while that this plot was maturing, under the counsel and co-operation of Pereny, that nobleman, true to his fluctuating character, did not the less maintain a negociation with Martinuzzi, and thus kept open for himself a constant door of retreat. He was occupied in countermining the very measure, at which he laboured most earnestly, and, had not Martinuzzi so decisively broke off the long projected union, between the Lady Czerina and Antoine, he would have betrayed, and ruined the

* *πανθ' ὁ μέγας χρονος μαραίνει.*—Soph. Ajax, v. 714.

object of, the conspiracy, even in the moment of its apparent successful consummation. His loyalty to his king, his duty to his country, and, what was more, his envy of the power, which Martinuzzi had acquired, would have yielded to the aggrandizement of his family, and the happiness of his son. But when his double treachery did not infer these consequences, his aspiring mind became filled with indignation, at the thoughts of the regal dignity descending to Czerina, and he determined on overturning that domination, to which he could not submit. On the reef of Pereny's tergiversation were the fortunes of Iwan, as had been those of his father, in danger of striking; but also, the rocks, which lay exposed, above the stream of events, threatened a difficult and dangerous navigation.

What means the conspirators possessed, at all proportioned to their important enterprise, history has given us small clue to ascertain. It is in proof, that they had entered into a close confederacy with the Turk, but even such an alliance could hardly have presented a reasonable hope of a successful issue. The fame and splendour of Martinuzzi's last triumph could not fail of attracting, such multitudes of adventurers into his service, as must put him in a condition of taking the field against the sultan; besides, the tremendous lesson, lately taught to Austria, was calculated to strike a wholesome terror into the councils of the Ottoman, who would naturally pause, ere he provoked a similar castigation. The authority of Martinuzzi was established on the basis of his military genius and pre-eminent talents for government, and, with few exceptions, the vows, wishes, and hopes of the Magyari and the sons of Erdély, were turned on their regent as their future king, at once the destined liberator of Hungary, and the vindicator of the independence and dominion of Transylvania. "The head and front of" the present rash enterprise,—the man who alone could raise the standard of revolt, with the re-

motest chance of success, had suffered a signal defeat, and was a prisoner in the dungeons of his enemy. His prospects seemed utterly blasted; but when, in addition to this calamitous state of affairs, the life of the Graf Pereny, the prime mover in his cause, and his principal ground of trust, was suddenly extinguished, the fates themselves seemed to have irreversibly taken their side against him, and set their last seal upon the ruin of the Richter Iwan. — "Sic Fatis videbatur."

But time and chance happeneth to all sublunary things, which do not fall out according to the probability of second causes, but by the appointment of an overruling Providence, which, in those situations where human prudence and invention would utterly despair, interposeth unforeseen expedients, and confoundeth all calculation by the event. The seeds of revolution, so carefully sown by Pereny, and his adherents, though apparently cast upon a sterile soil, and choked by the weeds of untoward circumstances, were destined to spring up with a sudden and unexpected growth, and, like some tropical plant, to blossom, at once, in a flourishing maturity. "Nothing flieth swifter than fame," was said or sung by the poet of old, the truth of which observation might well be exemplified, from what was transpiring at Hermanstadt, about the period, unto which the successive stages of this fitful history, have at length conducted us. As if winged with telegraphic celerity, rumours were already afloat, that the graf, Peter Pereny, the flower of Hungarian chivalry, for so long time, falsely, supposed not to exist, had been cut down, at the threshold of the queen's palace, by the base and treacherous hand of their ancient abhorrence, Father Dominick.

The immediate partizans of Pereny, meanwhile, and the few others, trusted with the secret of the conspiracy, and advised of the graf's intention, to repair to the palace that morning, and announce to her highness, the peculiar circumstances, connected with her son's existence, and

the particulars of the projected insurrection in his favour, could hardly have been more stunned, if a thunder-bolt had fallen at their feet. Deprived of their leader, they felt their courage die away, and their arms fall from their hands.

Not more than one or two were cognizant of the real mystery, appertaining to the leaden crucifix; and the rest argued, from the circumstance of his confessor perpetrating the bloody deed, that Martinuzzi must have by some means or other, become privy to their proceedings, and had taken that decisive mode of blighting their plot, in its first formless embrion. Moreover, owing to the profound secrecy, with which Pereny had concerted his measure, the greater part of those, who acted under him, were strangers to the object, at which he aimed. Under these circumstances, but two opposite courses lay open to the conspirators—the one was to abandon their revolutionary projects, and each man to keep his own secret of how far he stood committed, which it was not otherwise likely the regent would arrive at. The alternative was, to precipitate their measures, which indeed, the universal horror conceived at the assassination of the graf, and the favourable augury of the victorious troops, having been left without the city walls, seemed to recommend. This latter expedient, it was decided, after a hasty and imperfect consultation, to adopt. Emissaries were immediately despatched to every quarter of the city, with instruction to excite and inflame the minds of the inhabitants, by the dissemination of all manner of libels, upon the character and government of Martinuzzi; and then, by stirring the populace up to overt acts of mutiny and riot, the serious tendency of which they were incapable of discerning, to compromit them to the revolution, which their own blind violence would effectuate.

To return to where we left the confessor in full retreat. On beholding him rush head-long, through the arched entrance of the dilapidated porchway, his pursuers con-

fidently calculated on securing their prisoner, and the reader will readily sympathize with, though we can never describe, their excess of amazement, when, on reaching the spot, they found no corporeal traces whatever, of the fugitive. All the stories so long current of the monk's diabolical endowments, flashed, with the force of conviction, across their minds, and there were few among that discomfited and open-mouthed rabble, but who devoutly gave him credit for having evaporated into his native nitrogen. Their very blood seemed to freeze in their veins, as, crossing themselves, they shrunk back, in terror. This opinion, which appearances certainly not a little countenanced, might have been universal, if it had not happened, that one or two present had been previously made aware, by Pereny, of the existence of a secret door somewhere about the ruin, and, whether they considered it unphilosophical we cannot say, but they felt disinclined to attribute the absence of the monk to a mysterious evanishment, when it might be more rationally accounted for, from natural causes. In few words, they mentioned to the incensed, but horrified body of pursuers, their strong suspicions, that Father Dominick had escaped their hands, by means of a mine or subterraneous way, which led from thence, into the palace. On receiving this natural explanation, of what otherwise seemed so frightfully inexplicable, a wild and tremendous shout of fury arose from the people, who were fast assembling. The cry of "to the palace! to the palace!" echoed on all hands. It was forthwith determined to post some half dozen of their number, as a guard of observation upon the spot, whilst the rest, reinforced by multitudes of mutineers, who, like bees, kept pouring from all points, in that direction, made sure of the ultimate caption of the assassin, by investing the palace. Moving with rapidity towards the gardens, the conspirators every where joining them, they made fast the postern, and left a small party to watch it. Their numbers, which were increasing every

moment as they advanced, amounted, by the time they reached the gates of the palace, to several hundreds, and the roar, like that of a herd of raging wolves, was still waxing more universal and louder, as they burst into the vestibule, in the unceremonious mode we related, some page or two ago. Such as had been in the confidence of Pereny, immediately drew several paces back, with an involuntary impulse of respect for Ferraro's feelings, as they beheld him kneeling beside the body, of his murdered sire. This new theme of sympathy got whispered from voice to voice, and echoed from rank to rank, and spreading with electric rapidity, increased still more the rage of the riotous assemblage.

As the "most sweet" vox populi, hushed for a time, again found itself a vent,—Queen Isabella reached the scene of action. "What mean these clamours?—this outrage? What want you with us?" she demanded, in commanding tone, of the rude mob; at the same time advancing into the midst of the crowded hall. The vital energy with which, at the moment, her whole form seemed to be animated suited well with, and gave entire effect to, that regal air, which ever characterised her slightest movement.

"We seek for the person of the murdering villain who stabbed the Graf Pereny, whose noble blood is not ditch-water, that it should flow unavenged;" replied one, who took upon himself to be the spokesman of the insurgents.

"My people are in quest of that man you name," replied the queen. Knew I where he had hidden him, doubt not, but I would instantly deliver him to the tribunal of justice; then, wherefore this uproar?"

"That's not what we require," returned the other; "the sword of justice is like to fall light upon his head, whom Martinuzzi favours. Your highness must e'en surrender the assassin into our hands—we are bent on justice, do ye see, and justice we will have, after our

own reading. The universal demand, in every corner of the streets, is blood for blood! Vengeance on the murderer of Pereny!"

The vindictive cry was instantly repeated, by the mouths of several in the hall, and echoed back, from ten hundred lips, without the palace walls. The vault of heaven seemed to return the terrible denunciation, and Ferraro, who, until that moment, had appeared utterly lost in the depth and abstraction of his grief, took up the word, with bitter and fierce emphasis. "Hearken to me, my friends," he cried, starting from his recumbent posture. There was a momentary pause, which the deep and solemn feelings pervading, as by a common chord of sympathy, the whole of that congregated multitude, rendered sublime. It passed;—a hush of expectation next ensued, and in the deep silence which followed, Ferraro moved forward, with a bold and manly grace, to address the people.

"You prompt me well, my friends!" he exclaimed, in a voice of dignity and firmness. "It was this dagger spilt the life-stream of the great Pereny,—with the same weapon will I, his son, strike the assassin to the heart. Blood for blood!—Vengeance on the murderer of my father!"

At that instant, a sort of confusion arose without the doors. An attendant spoke some few words, in a low voice, to Isabella.

"How! — wounded!" she replied, more audibly — "hem! — here! — do you say? — surely; — convey the marquis hither."

There ensued an obscure, low, and reiterated exclamation, and the vast multitude rolled on either side, like the foaming surges on the bosom of a lake, to admit the procession of certain of the royal household, bearing the languid form of Castaldo. His wound had been staunched, but his countenance was extremely pale, and had all the fixed monumental character of death. Blood

stains marked their route, as they carried their well-nigh unconscious burthen into the middle of the hall, and placed him gently on a seat. At his feet, lay extended the livid gory spectacle of Pereny. Planted before him, like some avenging minister, his doublet splashed with blood, his outstretched arm, upholding the horrible instrument of crime, his brows bent, and his features rigid with resolution, stood Marc Antoine. Nearer still, Isabella, as an accusing spirit, was stationed, fixing her eyes, that, like light, seemed to pierce through the darkest recesses of his soul, upon his countenance; and on every side, was one vast array of armed men, with brandished weapons, whose visages reflected, in stern sympathy, the sentiment, which, on his entrance into the hall, the son of the graf thundered in his ears; "Blood for blood!—Vengeance on the murderer of my father!"

Castaldo, already faint with loss of blood, seemed struck aghast at the solemn scene, into the midst of which he had been unexpectedly transported; his eye wildly wandered from one object to the other. A fearful convulsion, at once of soul and body, shook him, and uttering a choaked groan, he sunk down in a swoon, from off his seat. By Isabella's direction, delivered in an under voice to her attendants, he was immediately conveyed, in his insensible condition, into an adjacent apartment, and *secured*.

The awful and important business in hand, which the sudden introduction of Castaldo had for a minute interrupted, was now resumed, by some one of the conspirators without, breaking forth in a loud voice.

"The assassin hath found entrance into the home of majesty,—he lurks in an apartment of the regal palace! Let us enter, that we may drag forth the villain, into day-light."

"How know you thus much?" demanded the queen; "only prove your assertion, and I am ready to surrender the criminal, you are in search of; but be it at your own

peril, for remember, that as yet he hath undergone no trial, and it is fit, his punishment be left to the tribunals of his country."

This representation, which was made by the astute queen, to save appearances, might as soon have stilled a raging sea, as have abated, one iota, the exasperation of the populace. The confusion increased with every moment; a thousand voices exclaimed,—"that a secret passage led thither from the old porchway, by which the inhuman assassin had obtained admittance into the palace, and they insisted on his being given up to their fury."

"Ha! is it so?" cried the queen; "well," she proceeded, addressing the concourse, in the manner of one compelled to yield to overwhelming force, "it would be useless, I see, my offering any further obstacle to your wish, my friends; so you have permission, some of you, to explore the palace." Then turning to Ferraro, she spake in his ear, a deep emphatic whisper.

"Marc Antoine," she said, "the man that stabbed your father, is now conferring with Czerina, in her bedchamber, and urging her to ——. Right, my friend, be sudden as desires."

"Blood shall have blood!" shouted Ferraro, bursting from her, with the voice and gesture of an exterminating angel, and the next instant, he darted like lightning up the flight of stairs, leading from the hall, to the higher suite of apartments. A select body of the insurgents, with drawn rapiers, and looks of fury, followed: Isabella folded her robe closer about her as they passed; she bit her lip, till the blood gushed forth,—*she knew not of it;*—she clenched her hands, till the long nails pierced the flesh,—*she heeded it not.* Her eyes sparkled fiercely, and demoniacally in the very restlessness of joy,—in the exultancy, the fruition of long-harboured hopes. With unequal, but firm tread, she was crossing the hall, towards the staircase, when her attention, which had for more than a minute

been respectfully solicited, was at length attracted by the obeisance of one of her officers, who seemed to desire to address her.

" Not now,—not now,—I cannot now," she hastily observed, and would have moved away.

" The baron bid me say, he must speak with your highness instantly," rejoined the officer.

" Must, sir,—presently will do. Whom, said you ?"

" The Baron Bathori."

" Umph ! — hah !" said Isabella ; " Well, I cannot be disturbed now."

" He affirms," rejoined the officer; " that he witnessed the perpetration of the fatal deed, from the window of his prison. The person they seek is not the real assassin."

" Hush, hush, sir ! — No more of that, as you value my favour. Nay, an' that monk be not the murderer," she added, in observing the surprise of the man ; " we all of us know, he well merits death on many another score,— so let not this go further."

" The baron says, that Piadena —," rejoined the officer.

" I know it, sir; I know, what you would say," interrupted the royal interlocutor in her turn ; " and have I not that man under ward ? ha, sir ?" and Isabella pointed significantly to the door of the chamber, where she had caused Castaldo to be confined. " Enough,—go, silence the baron, and tell him I will attend to hear what he has to offer, within these five minutes,—that will be, I hope," she added, in a low inward tone, as the officer withdrew, — " that will be, after he has struck home ! They are i'the toil ! — *Swell, heart ! — it is accomplishing !*" and Isabella, anticipating the triumph of requited wrong, — her every feature expressing the uncontrollable exultation, that heralded the fruition of long-desired revenge, followed in the wake of the conspirators.

In the meanwhile, all the horrors of unrestrained sack and pillage, were enacting through the interior of the palace. Exasperated at not having discovered,

so soon as they expected, the object of their wrath, the mob, "in their own inimitable way,"* took vengeance on the senseless building. They burst into apartment after apartment, — and wrecked their disappointment indiscriminately, upon all they met with. Every sort of waste and devastation was committed by these insurgents, who proceeded to demolish whatever they could not readily remove. The tapestry, forthwith, was battered and destroyed,—the windows were dashed out; costly furniture shattered to pieces; chests and cabinets broken open, and their contents, either embezzled or scattered about. In their abhorrence of the crime, they sought to avenge, they forgot all observance due to the august inhabitress. At length, when, despite their deeds of demolition, their rigorous search appeared likely to have an unsuccessful issue, many of the more active of the tumultuous assemblage, began to meditate on surer and swifter methods, of destruction. Several voices were heard instigating the rioters to resort to fire, as a means, equally desperate and certain, of forcing the inhuman object of their resentment out of his hiding place. A dreadful shout of applause testified the concurrence of the mob. Torches were applied to the hangings,—bonfires were raised in more than one of the apartments; and the flames were fed with furniture, or whatever else the incendiaries could lay their hands upon.

The consequences were not long in manifesting themselves. The conflagration spread with awful rapidity from room to room, and roared and crackled among the heaps of nourishment every where afforded, by the pictures, arras, and ornamented wood-work. Part of the roof presently gave way, toppling on the head of many a devoted victim, with the noise of thunder. The yells arising from time to time, proclaimed, from amid the smoke and flames, in which the building was

* Bulwer.

enveloped, the multitude, who were actors in this scene of desolation and horror.

Two persons remained for more than a minute, in a chamber of the palace, as if insensible of the ruin, with which they were encompassed; and the shocking death which momentarily threatened, unless they took some measures to ascertain their rescue. This chamber was the sleeping apartment of the Lady Czerina; and the two occupants of it, at the moment we have mentioned, were Isabella and Ferraro. The broad displeasant light, that, in unholy and imperfect union with the sunshine, illuminated the room, shed a wild and frantic colouring on the expression of their faces, as the queen and her wretched victim stood in fixed silence looking on one another, not in the bereavement of fear,—but like baffled tigers, whose prey, after having hunted it down, hath suddenly slipped, they know not how, through their savage fangs. Thus, glared they on all around, and on each other. When Ferraro, by the aid of the insurgents, had forced the obstacles of lock and bolt, and rushed madly through the ante-room into the bed-chamber of our heroine, to immolate the murderer of his father; — how was he struck aghast, to find both rooms unoccupied? His confederates immediately retired, and went forward to commence their work of uncalculating havoc, but he stood like one, in a state of stupefaction, nailed to the middle of the apartment. He looked about,—on that couch was wont to repose his beloved! he moved towards it,—his heart was rapidly softening. Some human feelings began to steal insensibly over the ground-swell of his soul, like oil, to allay the agitation of the waters. The dæmon which possessed him, seemed silenced, if not cast out, when, at the moment, his evil genius again presented itself, in the person of Isabella.

Suddenly she came behind him, and, grasping his arm firmly in her hand, she whispered in his ear, in a

deep hollow, but impatient tone, "What gaze you at on that coverlet? — have you done the deed?"

Ferraro informed her of Martinuzzi's absence.

Isabella gnashed her teeth, and her knit brow blackened to the hues of disappointed vengeance.

Both were silent.

"Is she in bed, that there you fix your eyes so earnestly?" demanded the queen, at length, in a scoffing tone, rendered doubly bitter from the transports of internal rage, the exhibition of which, policy yet obliged her to suppress.

Ferraro shuddered and stept backward. "Mother of Jesus! where *is* Czerina?" he exclaimed, stung by the last words of Isabella, to a state of mental emotion that was terrible.

"Now, beshrew thy standing there, so like a statue! I thought her youngling delicacies had been all laid out before thee; but, if she be not in bed, perchance she's with your father; or, say she breathes this life, it is to perfume some dungeon air, till she consent to wed as the tyrant prescribes; — 'tis evident he has been here, and borne away the struggling girl to ——"

At this moment, part of the floor fell with a loud crash, and a volume of smoke and flame from the yawning aperture rose thickly up. Ferraro, in the agony of his troubled soul, rushed from the spot, and sought, through the smouldering ruin, and amid fire, dust, and glowing embers, at the imminent risk of life, the two beings nearest his heart, one of whom was as much the object of his hatred, as the other, of his love. Isabella followed, but, owing to the abstraction of her thoughts, and the progress of the flames, she was in danger, every instant, of being crushed beneath the weight of the blazing beams and rafters, that were falling fast around.

On Isabella's re-appearance among the multitude, who were watching the progress of the devouring element, her attendants thronged around her with loud, if not

hearty demonstrations of joy, at beholding her in safety. She was now informed of several important events, which the last half-hour had seen accomplished.

Those tumults, which, in the beginning, were no more than a mere ebullition of popular wrath against Father Dominick, at length threatened the subversion of the government. The misguided populace, for the most part even ignorant of the tendency of their own acts, had been hurried into extremities, and, what was originally riot, by insensible but rapid gradations, expanded into revolution. Every quarter of the city, from its centre to its battlements, was, by this time, filled with noise and tumult; and many of the lower rank took arms, with the hope of advantaging their fortunes, in the general licence and confusion.

Already had the citadel been forced, the gates of the dungeon of Hermanstadt thrown open, and, as a necessary consequence, all state prisoners found themselves at liberty. Among others, who were thus let out of confinement, were the Counts Maylat and Nadastis, who, associated with Vicchy, Duke of Eissenburg, were hailed on their appearance by a loud cry from the multitude, which conveyed their determination to commit, into the hands of those magnats, the further direction of affairs. These acclamations still rung above the crowds, who now filled the space around the citadel, and the whole adjacent streets, when, by the direction of Vicchy, a herald, planting himself on the broad steps of the castle, proclaimed the Richter Iwan, King of Hungary and Transylvania.

In the thoughtless extravagance of the populace at the moment, this proceeding, however unexpected, was welcomed with loud demonstrations of joyfulness, and the name of Iwan was hailed with acclamations, as the main hope of the nation. Amid this clamour, unto which the tolling of the alarm-bells gave discordant emphasis, Vicchy presented himself on the balcony, and,

in an animated oration, addressed to the various passions of the people, set before their eyes the ambition and unrighteous dominion of Martinuzzi, which they had it now in their power to subvert, by the abolishing of his office, and the election of Iwan to the vacant throne. "He only," concluded the orator, "is fit to sway a sceptre, who can wield a sword. Choose ye for your king the Richter Iwan, whose surname of Vilez has become a battle-cry, rousing, like the blast of a trumpet, the courage of his followers, and striking terror into the enemy."

This allusion to the martial fame of our captive hero would not seem particularly well timed; nevertheless, the discourse was received with a murmur of applause, and loud cries of "*Eljen, Eljen, Eljen, a' Király!*" (Live the King!) rang through the air.

Emboldened therewith, Vicchy was just on the point of explaining to his audience, the nature of the Richter's claims to sovereign authority, when the words died unspoken on his lips, on learning that, notwithstanding the most diligent search, the Richter Iwan was no where to be found. A convulsive feeling of mingled joy and anxiety choked his utterance. "Can he have been sent to sleep with his fathers?" murmured Vicchy to himself; "and is it possible, that even yet the promise of the Boszorkany will be vindicated?" The agitated noble turned away abruptly, and entered the castle.

The circulation of the news of Iwan's disappearance struck consternation into the minds of all, who were in the secret of our hero's rights; and his unaccountable absence, in the very moment when he might have taken full possession of every thing he coveted, promised most effectually to disconcert the projects of the conspirators.

The lord regent had been sought for with no less diligence by *his* adherents; but, as in the case of Iwan, the result hitherto proved alike unsuccessful and inexplicable.

Meanwhile, more than one messenger attempted to

make his way without the walls, to require the victorious army of Martinuzzi to march upon the city and put down the tumult, but all the barriers had been surprised and seized after a sharp conflict; and, so strict and vigilant was the guard, the rebels established, that none of these voluntary emissaries could accomplish their errand. The small force, which garrisoned the castle, declined to act on their own responsibility, though there could be little doubt, that, had Martinuzzi shown himself, he might, with their aid, have easily crushed this sudden and ill-digested revolution, and awed the people again into allegiance.

In this state of confusion, the insurrection being at a full pause, and our hero not being forthcoming to take advantage of the general rise in his favour, it presently occurred to some of the insurgents, who were not in the secret of Iwan's parentage, that the wisest use they could make of their power, would be to enthrone the Lady Czerina, whom they had ever idolized, and commiserated for the state of tutelage in which her tyrannical guardian retained her, in the sovereignty of the country.

Of the vast number of persons, who were now attempting a change in the government, not one in a hundred had been initiated in the real character of the conspiracy; so that the moment the propriety of the above course of action was hinted at, the popular opinion was freely expressed in its favour. It spread through all classes, with a rapidity like lightning. The demand for the Lady Czerina was echoed from court-yard, and hall, and battlement, and every one shouted, "Long live the Lady Czerina!" The unanimity of the magistrates and superior class of inhabitants, on this point, was admirable; but even here their hopes were doomed to be disappointed. The fearful cry speedily flew through the multitude, and passed into all quarters of the city, that her highness was no where to be heard of; and soon the probability, of the royal maiden having pe-

rished under the ruins of the palace, suggested itself to the busy apprehensions of the populace.

Men now began anxiously to meditate, or to ask of each other, by what procedure they could, most readily, legalize their excesses, and throw the veil of regular form, over the intemperance of their sedition? But even while they paused for a reply, the course of events was urging on a dread solution. We allude to that catastrophe of our tale, which history hath since handed down, from generation to generation, with a faltering pen, and which, since it brings our narrative to the period, which we have fixed upon for its boundary, requires of us, that we should enter upon a fresh, if not a concluding manuscript.

## MANUSCRIPT XXXII.

"Te tua fata docebo."
VIRGIL.

"Expellam te de statione tuâ, et de ministerio tuo deponam te."
ISAIAH, xxii. 19.

WHEN her handmaidens came into the royal bed-chamber, some time on the morning of the day, to which the currency of our story hath (with whatever tedium to the patient reader), at length, conducted us, they were dismayed to perceive the Lady Czerina, lying senseless upon the floor. Having gently lifted her upon the couch, it was with some difficulty, they were able to recall her intellectual life, and re-animate the vital spark, in a frame so marbly and attenuated, that their very endeavours seemed like contesting, with the king of terrors, the regal prey he had appropriated, and on which he had already set his seal. By the aid of restoratives, however, accompanied with skill, and gentle tendance, they were, at last, in some measure, successful; but still the faculties of our heroine appeared unsettled, and the slender thread, upon which her renovated existence evidently hung, seemed too finely drawn out to last long. Having feebly intimated her wish, that her attendants should withdraw into an adjoining room, they were induced to leave her to the healing dews of slumber. The

royal maid endeavoured, forthwith to compose herself to rest, and her agitated mood insensibly subsided into a dream-like trance.

By a natural association of thought, or perhaps from a faint remembrance of what occasioned the syncope, out of which she had just emerged, her reverie, presently, came to hinge on that portentous incident of a childhood, which, like the tree of Java, had thrown a pestilential umbrage on all the succeeding years of life. She conceived that she was, already, become as one of the blessed, and was exalted to a place in highest heaven, between Father Dominick and the unknown female, who, on one memorable occasion, had lavished on her all those caresses and endearing terms, proper from a mother to a beloved daughter. The next instant, she believed herself again lost, and wandering amid those dreary, subterranean cells and passages, that branched in all directions, beneath the site of Hermanstadt ;* and then she fancied herself seated, once more, beside that strange lady, on a settee of crimson velvet, in a chamber hung round with arras, of the same costly material ; and the painful impression came over her, with all its original acuteness, that her unknown companion was not in the possession of her right understanding. Much she talked of disputed claims, and crowns, and legal rights, and, at one time, the lady produced a roll of paper before Czerina, and said, " Alas, the day ! my sweetest child, thy father is gone mad, and out of the very excess of his inexorable and insane violence, which he calls his duty to his country, would destroy thee, and himself, and me and all ; but trust a mother's vigilance, to contravene his cunning ; look ye, love, how, from the secret cabinet of your hard-hearted parent, I have abstracted these murderous writings, and thus I consign, to everlasting oblivion, the unnatural testimony that would undo us."

* At the present day, these are made use of for public granaries.

Saying these words, she approached the fire-place, with the view of casting the papers into the flames, when her purpose was arrested, by the sudden griping of her wrist, and, on looking round, she started, and our heroine faintly screamed in sympathy; for, unperceived by either, the reverend father had glided into the room, most opportunely, to prevent the fatal perpetration. He and the female, for some seconds, contested the possession of the papers, and, during the struggle, the cowl of the confessor fell from his face, which, to the inexpressible amazement of Czerina, disclosed the features of Cardinal Martinuzzi. At that instant the arras was pushed aside, and a gigantic wolf-dog stalked forward unannounced. The lady beheld, shrieked in sudden fear, and went off into convulsions. While Martinuzzi's whole attention was directed to bringing her about, the roll of papers, which was the object of their late contention, slipped, disregarded, to the floor. Nearly at the same moment, *unperceived of all but Czerina*, the sagacious animal snapped it up, and ran off with his prize. By whatever motive impelled, our heroine promptly followed in pursuit. She tracked the footsteps of the brute through many devious passages, until she found herself in the same gloomy and subterranean vault, where, it will be remembered, the sentry of the precipice came, to overhear the colloquy, between the monk and the gipsy Unna. It was lighted up. Here, as the dog paused, the child approached him from behind, but failed in resolution, when she would have taken hold of the ravished roll, the recovery of which had been her sole inducement for instituting a pursuit. And now gruff voices, which sounded a short way off, startled her childish apprehension,

"Hark ye, Wurmser," cried one, "where's the dog?"

"Here, Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!" called several voices.

The animal let go his prize, and hurried off, in obedience to the well-known signal.

Czerina, after a minute's hesitation, possessed herself of the roll of paper, but having done so, held it for awhile irresolute.

All these successive circumstances did our heroine re-enact, in her troubled sleep, and again, as formerly, she paused, doubtful in what manner she had best dispose of the recovered writings. At length, after a short period given to reflection, her resolution forced its way spontaneously to her tongue, and she audibly soliloquised. "Yes," she said, "*I will secure the packet from the cardinal, in yon receptacle.*"

Agreeably to this object, she thought she moved a few paces, when the form of her guardian uprose from the very frame-work she was approaching, and, at the prodigy, her soul seemed to die away within her. The vision became every moment more painfully distinct, but even in that instant, in which she stood oppressed with its vividness, an energetic voice rung on her ears.

"*Ha!—where?—explain,—I charge you child! in the nameo f mysterious Providence, answer me!*"

The bonds of Czerina's unnatural trance were thus abruptly broken—her long silken lashes separated, and as she opened her cerulean orbs, the pure confidence of childhood, with all its vernal developments of feeling, vanished from her bosom, like the unsubstantial pageant of Astræa from this rank earth. But her mental faculties seemed given to irremediable confusion, on perceiving, that she was, in very earnest, seated in the crimson-arrassed chamber of her dream.

Martinuzzi himself was standing over her—"Speak!" he repeated, in a voice of uncontrollable eagerness, "and tell me—in the name of mysterious heaven—tell me! dearest child, *where was't you hid the packet?*"

Czerina made no reply, but gazed with a bewildered, and inquisitive expression on her guardian's face, and on all around. It was an awful, a sublime moment. The fine and indivisible line, which insulates the shadowy

pathless desert of sleep was overleaped, and an impulsive gleam from its dim horizon, seemed gifted with a power to illustrate the substantial realities of life. The slumber of the body is the enfranchisement of the soul, from the ligation of sense; and the influxes of our waking and dreaming thoughts, may be said to alternate on our consciousness, as the Rhone and the lake of Leman roll and toss themselves within the same bed, without being confounded, or commingling their waters. But for once the flood of sleep, suspended in its course, swayed in correspondence with the stormy undulations, which encompassed its silent flowing volume, or rather, as was proved by the event, the apparent phenomenon attendant on Czerina's awaking, might be compared to the confluence of those rivers at Ballyarthur,* whose troubled waves descend from their separate solitudes, to find repose in the deep sea together—

> "The blended waters are no more distinguished,
> But roll unto the sea one common flood."

"Holy Mary!" murmured Czerina, still imperfectly awake, "Methought I passed away, as they say turtles do, in a vision—but 'tis all a mockery,—or how came your eminence with me?" she continued, in a slow low voice, after a long, painful, and ineffectual effort to reconcile the pertinence of her reverend companion's questions, with a strong impression of her having just awakened out of a dream.

Martinuzzi silently contemplated for more than a minute, her wan and dilated orbs, and his eyes ran over those traces of perturbation, so conspicuous in her countenance: as he gazed, his impatient temper subsided into a melancholy calm; and then, instead of entering upon the subject, he evidently had so much at heart, he replied to the broken interrogatory of our heroine, by informing

* The Augrim and the Avoca.—This second meeting of the waters in co. Wicklow, takes place at a very short distance from the sea.

her, in cautious and soothing syllables, of his having introduced himself into her chamber, as was sometimes his wont, by the secret access of a sliding panel, and mentioned that he had found her wrapped in a deep slumber. He concluded, by slightly alluding to the royal edifice being in flames, to account for his having conveyed her from thence, for safety to her present asylum.

The gentle girl drooped her languid head during this explanation, and seemed passively to take in the sense of her guardian's words. She offered no remark, but, resigning her soul to life's final impulses, sat breathing there, as fair a piece of earth, as ever the approach of death came unto with the beauty of the steps, which, upon the mountain top, are the messengers of glad tidings. She hovered between life and immortality, like some embodied exhalation of the morning mist, whose phantom outline stands on tiptoe for awhile, waiting to be robed in the gold and crimson of eternal day.

Oh ! there is nothing so obstinately blind as the affections, and though an instinctive pang shot, like an ice-bolt, through his heart, Martinuzzi refused to read the meaning of those death-like symbols, which, if he had witnessed in any other than in Czerina, he would have comprehended at a single glance. Presently, in a subdued, but still earnest tone, he repeated the inquiry, which had roused her from her vision.—" Daughter," he said, " endeavour to collect yourself, and tell me where you hid the roll of writing, to which you audibly alluded in your sleep ?"

To these words, Czerina made no answer; they dropped upon the maiden's ear, and the sense was transmitted to her vacant brain, but touched no apprehensive chord—her wan eyes gazed inexpressive, into the face of the speaker, and then her head drooped upon her bosom.

The vacancy of that look pierced her parent with a double pang, and he paused, ere taking her hand in his, and drawing her closer to him, he again mildly addressed

her; "Czerina, my child," he began, "until now have I abstained from all mention of that mystery, which must be here, and within this hour, at whatever risk, elucidated. Look around thee, love, and view with observant eye, the tapestry of this chamber;—call to mind, how and what time, your limbs last pressed those cushions, on which you now recline;—there, there, lean on my arm—cling like the ivy to its parent stem, when the north wind rages. Be not alarmed—the bolt that searches, chastens, and if seared, we are not all sapless; nor ever shall my state, though stripped, and by the cutting blasts of perfidy assailed, fail thee for a staff; look up, nor shrink thus in my arms; no harm shall reach thee—none, by the deep expiation now ebbing at my heart!—none. Be composed."

During this address, Czerina had risen from her seat, and having cast wild and inquisitive regards on the few, but magnificent accommodations of the chamber, she coiled herself under the arm of her guardian, in manifest affright.

Martinuzzi, for an instant, remained almost irresolute, but the stake that hinged upon that moment was too mighty to allow of his receding.—"Daughter," he shortly resumed, with uncontrollable earnestness and emotion, "on the issue of this hour rests more than thou imaginest. Oh, pardon me, then, if I seem harsh, since with whatever pain I must enforce an answer. Look around I say—nay, start not,—where was thy sad soul e'en now, when my demand did visit thee like life, and stay thy ebbing spirit? *Speak, I must know thy dream.*"

"Ask me not," wildly responded Czerina, "When I, of late, but close my eyes, my soul hath strange capacity of horror. Then, the real, deep, awful, the eternal sleep is over me, and I, an empty shade, will wander all alone, and all in darkness, carrying my own sad bier; fleeing amid the monuments below, or peering into crypts, whose blindness doth the light sepulchral not illuminate, and where things abound, more horrible by far, than worms

and darkness. Wailings, and stifled shrieks inhabit there, and disembodied crimes, and shapes in glimmering whiteness. I felt erewhiles like some such phantom—yet, not so. Methought, sir, I was a buried thing, alive, seeking through charnels for some unguessed spot, hewn out of marble, where to lodge my griefs in, and where, in icy loathsomeness, the virtuous eye might lose its credit, and the wise tongue grow mute." She spoke with a voice of inward shuddering, and when she had done, she turned away from Martinuzzi—her hands dropped listless by her side, and her glazed orbs became fixed on the opposite tapestry.

Again Martinuzzi almost faltered in his purpose.—While he yet hesitated, a slight rap sounded against the chamber-door. It slowly unclosed, and Baron Bathori stood in the threshold.

"My lord cardinal," he said, "I again implore of you to allow me to put down this tumult. The boisterous rabble, gathered in multitudes, are now at fault, for it seems the Richter Iwan, whom they meant to exalt to the bad eminence of their leader, is not to be found in any of the prisons of Hermanstadt. I would undertake, even with what troops are in the citadel, to re-establish order in half an hour."

"No, Baron, not so," replied Martinuzzi, in a composed voice; "there may be no need; but do you join me twenty minutes hence, within the cathedral,—I will then unfold myself further."

Bathori withdrew.—The clamours of the multitude, which for some time had subsided to a low murmur, now shook the air with greater violence than ever. Even in their remote retreat, Martinuzzi and his fair companion could distinguish voices calling upon the queen by name. "Czerina! Czerina!" rung on every side. Shout answering shout, above, below, on the battlements of the castle, in the streets of the city. They could likewise hear the rude mob besiege the building, battering loudly

at the walls and avenues ; lighted torches were thrown in at the windows, and once there was one hurled with such prodigious force, as to dash through the casement into the very midst of the chamber, which the regent and our heroine occupied. It fell at the feet of Czerina, and enhanced the terror, and added to the state of trepidation, with which she was shaken. In this condition, doubt and confusion pervading all her faculties, she imbibed the idea, that the myrmidons of the regent were waiting without, to cement with her blood the usurpation of her guardian. Few things could be more deplorable at that juncture than such a misconception, and Martinuzzi's agony and dismay may be imagined, on finding unresisted terror take possession of our heroine. For a few moments she stood speechless, the victim of ineffable horror ; then crouching at his feet in agony—

" Oh ! that the earth would gape, and gulf me to its centre !" she exclaimed.

" Dear child, be calm !" interposed Martinuzzi, in an anguished voice.

" Oh ! that the swift whirlwind would entangle me !" she presently proceeded, without heeding him ; " and life and motion give unto the spot I stand on !—waft me athwart the wide world, sink me down to night, the everlasting night which mortal eye can never penetrate."

It would be impossible to do justice to the emotions of Martinuzzi, at witnessing the distraction of Czerina. He hung fondly over her, and folding his arms across, to hold her to him, sobbed like a child.

" What ! a tear ?" cried Czerina ; " without doubt, thou hast had a dream about me, thou art so pitiful. I feel a strange delight while thou dost clasp me ; and I am sure thou wilt not let the unhallowed multitude, the savage herd—oh ! thou art too good for that—thou wilt never give me up to bleed to death ; but prithee, take me to thy bosom—shield me !"

"Czerina, *kintsaso!*"* said Martinuzzi, in a low, faltering tone, "strong fancy wilders thee. Never shall any bloody grasp impede the tide of thy young veins, nor ruthless mortal force purple this tender arm. Be not afeard—am I not near thee? My heart shall be your guard. Why wilt tremble so? Are not these arms for a protection?"

A strange change came over the manner of Czerina; she grew calm at this moment, and there was a solemn fervour in the tones of her voice, as she made answer—

"The arms of *Death* are, sir; and where he reigns, I am told is impregnable. Thither I'm hastening. There's a pomp about him too, passing life's pageantries. Chill comes his breath, his kiss is cold and chaste, and his embrace is indeed strong protection. Kings, cardinals, nor all the earth's authorities, are one half so strong, so safe, so silent."

Martinuzzi was smitten to the heart: he looked at his daughter—his lip quivered, and every instant the agony of his spirit deepened. His long pent-up feelings broke through all restraint, and he wept bitterly. Then, with a sudden impulse, he threw himself at the feet of Czerina, and implored her, in the most pathetic terms, to endeavour to compose her feelings. Although it was a sight to melt a heart of stone, to see this mighty dignitary humbling himself before his own unacknowledged child, there was nothing wonderful in the spectacle. What are the vain pride, the glory—what the circumstance of this world, when put in competition with the least affection of the heart? And if weighed against the dictates of a parent's feeling, it is the balance of tinsel against bullion.

A strange hallucination laid strong hold of our heroine's mind, on witnessing the grief of Martinuzzi, as he knelt before her, and in such urgent terms entreated her. She

* Dearest.

conceived, that she was at length invested with her regal power and havings, and that the regent was petitioning for pardon, on account of the high hand, with which he had carried his authority, during her non-age. Impressed with this idea, she broke with an air of majesty from the hold of Martinuzzi, and after walking to and fro in the apartment for the space of a minute, stopped opposite to the imaginary criminal, who remained prostrate, with his face locked in his hands, and his forehead buried in the crimson cushions of the settee.

" Rest you there, now, my lord cardinal," she said, in a tone of supreme haughtiness ; " that posture best befits the man, so lately seated on my throne above me : so—'tis well. Now hearken to the high misdemeanours with which thou art charged withal, and, if thou canst, acquit yourself. Trust us, sir, however, we despair thereof ; we wish you a happy issue out of this danger—'twill much content us. God's mercy ! gentleman, we never knew what vengeance meant, but justice must not be persuaded ; and to compromit the safety of high offenders, like yourself, were but to tempt the insolence of men of lesser note. Lord Cardinal Martinuzzi, erewhiles regent of this realm, give ear to our arraignment !"

" Hold my heart-strings !" internally ejaculated Martinuzzi.

" Nay," proceeded Czerina, " be confident and boldly plead ; nor, at the worst, doubt but that we shall temper justice with mercy ; we were to blame else. Your eminence stands here, accused of grievous sins against our own and dear country's weal—firstly, of whistling to thee the rank breath of the common feudaries, to swell the topmost gallant-sail of thy ambition, and bear down the barks of many best and wisest of our liege magnats, contrary to the old usage of our land. Thou art further charged with having long conspired against our sovereign person, till we were led to think, thy dark devices must rip our father's cenotaph, and provoke his royal dust to

assume some dreadful form, to charge thy guilt, and scare thee with avenging looks from thy usurped estate. Nor is this all:—Presuming, it may be, on our years and sex, thou didst oppose thy usurped greatness to our proper welfare, to our dearest peace, and, with the hand of arbitrary rule, didst overbear our reason—saucily control our sphere of action—thereby frighting our very soul, startling the life-blood from our heart, making us... Raise thee up, impious man, and, if thou darest, look what thy godless wrong hath made me—the wreck, the shadow of my former self. Christ save me! but since the accursed hour I first descried thy visage, lurking beneath the robe of Father Dominick—even on that ground where now thou kneel'st and groan'st, have I never shaken hands with death's twin sister, peace. Ay, grovel—hide thee in the centre, from every living eye. Thou hadst best, for as thou hast doomed me to a smileless and abortive life, so surely, unless thou showest good argument, shall justice wreathe fetters about thy limbs, which, like a snake, (I do but use the terms with which, with unreverend boldness, thou reviledst thy sovereign,) —which, like a snake enamoured of thy greatness, shall gnaw a passage to thy savage heart, till thy flesh and they become incorporate. Ha! do you writhe? 'twere wisest, else, by the holy rood! thou shalt not live so proud and arrogant. Tempt not a wrath as hot as flames of hell, lest—there is a word,—villain! that hast cut my virgin heart in twain. 'Tis my turn now to triumph. Ho! I am your queen, and I can make thee nothing but a corpse!"

Czerina ceased, and looked around her, with the pride and bearing of an injured queen; her eyes were dilated and inflamed, her nostrils were distended, and her lip curved in excess of hauteur. We have said elsewhere, that our heroine's form was chiselled after the most symmetrical model, but withal, as to size, on somewhat of the Fenella scale, and the writer hath had occasion to

remark, in the course of his experience with the *beau sexe*, that the souls of such are, for the most part, of a magnitude, vastly disproportioned to the minuteness of the fragile tenement, wherein they are doomed to be "cabined, cribbed, confined," during their detention from their native sphere. Thus it was with Czerina; and the magnificence of her passion, excited into full play, can hardly be conceived, without recollecting, that her gentle nature, being overwrought, was fain to make an extra demonstration of mind, to countervail the physical disadvantages, under which she laboured.

"Major in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus." *

Her soul flamed out, as it were, all the more violently, through very indignation, that her bodily structure should be so inadequate, to represent the majesty of her wrath.

When Czerina bade Martinuzzi raise himself, and look what a wretch she had become, he lifted up his eyes, and riveted them upon her; and the pang of agony that shot through him at that moment, was almost more than man might bear. When she had done speaking, he reverted his gaze, and murmured several sentences in a broken inarticulate voice; the almost inaudible sounds were not addressed to his daughter, but were the spontaneous expression of a desolate and contrite heart, that made confession and sought consolation, where alone that could avail, or this be obtained. The state of feeling which the invective of our distraught heroine evinced, was of too exaggerated a character to subside into calm, and the impulse of her emotions soon prompted her to resume the discourse.

"Thou wert cognizant," she proceeded, with a look of fixed indignation; "all along, of the unhappy attachment subsisting betwixt me and Marc Antoine Ferraro. It matured under thy auspices. For a while thou smiled'st

* Statius.

upon our passion, and bade me entertain him as my future husband, but thy gentle seeming, was only in truth, a cruel feint, to sharpen to keener edge, the weapon of tyranny, with which thou hast destroyed me. 'Twas a refinement of malice worthy of thee, to buoy me up with hopes, only to blast them. The edict by which, on thy return from Coloswar, thou precludest Antoine Ferraro approaching our person, was the bolt of death. With such view, I know thou launched'st it, and as such, sir, it must be answered. We grant thy services to our state, and have ourselves taken warm interest in the opinion of thy glory. Yet, since the seat of your high soul is fired by lust of usurpation, all your bright shows, sir, tend to smoke and sparkle, and like the palace of our fathers at this fated hour, glitter but unto ruin. Again, I demand, what excuse hast thou for restricting thy sovereign in that particular, wherein the meanest peasant girl in her dominions is free to use her discretion? Speak forth,—we wait your reply."

The position of Martinuzzi grew every moment more painful and difficult; he had intended to have come to an explanation with his daughter, but her exalted mood forbade any immediate attempt at elucidating past mysteries; yet, the crisis of his and her fortune seemed to demand some such instant and energetic procedure. In this fearful strait, he determined to avail himself of the possession of a peculiar, but by no means uncommon faculty, whose exercise we have had occasion more than once to record, in the preceding pages of our narrative. Whilst our heroine, with stern gaze, awaited the defence of her guardian, a low, solemn, and death-like voice proceeded from the further depths of the apartment,—"Czerina! Czerina!" On hearing so strange and startling an invocation, the heart of the royal maid beat thick, and her brow fearfully contracted, as she looked in the direction, from whence the articulate sound, like a voice from the tomb appeared to issue; but no visible anima-

tion, save that of the regent and herself, was in the chamber. The tone ef Czerina's mind had been already exalted to a pitch bordering on insanity; therefore, from an instinctive and indefinable law of sympathy, the sudden sounding forth of the mysterious voice did not strike her as being so *very* wonderful and inexplicable, though in another frame of mind, such a circumstance was calculated in no ordinary degree, to excite astonishment. But, by a sort of mental necessity, the morbid condition of feeling, which our heroine owned at the period, must have flowed into, and harmonized with aught, that presented itself to her contemplation, partaking of the same general preternatural character.

Upon this marvellous property of the human mind, Martinuzzi founded his present hopes; and without allowing his daughter time to give utterance to the feeling of surprise, not unmixed with horror, that came over her, he demanded, whether she did not remember the tones of that plaintive voice? Circumstances favoured the deception practised on our heroine; her dream wrought in her still, and the very fact that the last and only time she had been in that apartment, similar accents had vibrated on her ear, induced her the more readily to imbibe the notion, which it was Martinuzzi's object to convey into her mind.

"The voice was that of the melancholy inmate of this chamber," replied Czerina, to the inquiry of her guardian. "Oh! how a dawn of light breaks in upon me!—Where is that lady?"

"In heaven," solemnly answered Martinuzzi.

"Then 'twas her spirit spoke," rejoined our heroine; "but list!" And she leant forward, as if to catch every syllable of that invisible sounding forth.

"Czerina!" repeated the low melancholy voice; "my poor unhappy child! I'm the same thou named'st,—give ear unto my words. Thou art not the rightful queen of Hungary,—she is thy maternal parent, who

now addresses you, and be not wrath with Martinuzzi, for he is thy father."

What a torrent of feelings rushed through the bosom of Czerina, at this announcement! Not if the skies had opened, and the speaker had shown herself in all the beatitude of heaven, would it have obtained a more ready credence. The mind of our heroine was so prepared by a long train of circumstances, to receive the information, that directly the word was spoken, it pierced into her soul with the strength of inspiration. She doubted not the truth of the declaration, for an instant, but cast herself at the feet of Martinuzzi, exclaiming,—

"Bless! oh bless thy daughter! I know thou art indeed my sire,—oh! bless and forgive me, sir, and for awhile shadow and shut me in thy silent soul; but ere I breathe my spirit away, which will be soon,—I feel,—do thou, Form of air! which art my mother's shade, enfold thy wings about me! wrap me up in love! and, if thou canst, transport me to thy mysterious source, in the world of spirits, to which I feel I am hasting."

"Czerina, my child, Christ pardon! Jesus have mercy on thy soul!" resumed the same mournful voice; "thou must endure thy mortal coil, for thy father's sake, whose clue of life is spun along with thine. The allotted charities that soothe the woes of life, are scattered in thy path,—so live, to cultivate thy happiness, by practising pure thoughts and pious deeds. But now, give heed unto what thy father hath just spoken, and acquaint him, where was't thou concealedst those papers, in thy childhood. Farewell! obey me, and be happy!"

Never was there a more thorough and sudden revolution of sentiment than that, which the deceptious procedure of Martinuzzi, wrought in the breast of Czerina. A tumult of emotions overcame her; her eyes gushed out unbidden tears, which streamed down her cheeks, and the words she heard falling upon her ears, as the admonition of an angel, shook her very soul. Only a few

minutes gone by, and she towered aloft his judge, accuser, sovereign,—and now, like a meek and repentant child, she wept and trembled before her mitred companion, who raised her from her incumbent posture, and strained her, with fond emotion, to his breast. By no other expedient than that to which he had recourse, considering the state of his daughter's mind at the time, could the information it behoved Martinuzzi to convey, have been so directly imparted, or have operated such important results. More than a minute of deep and awful silence ensued after the voice of the vision died away. At length, in a low insinuating cadence, sympathetic with the breathless feeling of the moment, Martinuzzi again addressed his entreatance to his now obedient daughter.

"The hour, the occasion, suit not to explain these mysteries," he said; "at present, one consideration is all paramount. Thou didst witness, that my late request stirred up thy mother, from the rest of the grave; thou heard'st, how she seconded my prayer. Indeed, you know not how much depends on that roll of writings being forthcoming. Bethink thee, dearest,—where have you concealed a document, big with the honour and acquittal of thy father. Oh speak! give me instant satisfaction herein."

Czerina looked her father earnestly in the face, for a few moments; then she half closed her eyes, as if every faculty of her mind was occupied in revolving occurrences, that flitted across the haze of her distempered brain; she spoke not,—she scarcely breathed. Her heart, with the violent and impotent effort of a young bird against its bars, struggled within her bosom; and the faint hectic, which more than once during the previous hour, had tinged her cheek's translucent alabaster, seemed finally drawn off and imbibed, by that fluttering pulsation. With dreadful strain on her mental powers, wound up beyond the apparent limits of endurance, Czerina at length essayed to reply to Martinuzzi. She commenced

speaking, then again paused, gasping for breath; and it was plain, that in the sequence of her gradual recollection, her mind was affected with dread and strange emotions. Several seconds passed ere she acquired voice to say:—

"Oh my dear sire! the horrible means, which presented itself for the concealment of that roll, is never to be obliterated from my memory. Nathless, it is in vain I would retrace further. I have no clue whereby to traverse o'er again the maze of those winding passages. The particulars of that abduction, and the ground I trod on, are engraved indelibly here," and she pressed her hand to her heart, "but the rest puzzles my faint remembrance."

Martinuzzi hid his face in his hands, and gnawed his livid lips in very bitterness of disappointment. Presently, however, as if all at once made aware, that every chance was not yet extinguished; he again questioned his daughter in a gentle and inductive tone of voice.

"Surely, love, you must have removed the roll from this room,—collect yourself, you can have no difficulty, remembering so much of your silly theft?"

"*That* I do remember," replied Czerina, speaking slowly and low; "but, alas! memory can only relate, to my dim soul, a confused and broken tale of all else that passed, till, wild and wan, and maddened, I found myself standing in the same fatal spot, where, on the over-night, a stroke was aimed at my life, of the particulars of which, although its reality is sufficiently attested by the scar on my breast, I retain but an indistinct impression."

Martinuzzi's countenance beamed once more radiant with the light of hope. "What—what say you, sweet?" he suddenly exclaimed with a kind of hysterical utterance, and bending forwards with indescribable eagerness of gesture; "were you now in that vault, where the deed you spake of was committed, would it be in your power,

do you think, to recover the possession of those papers, you conveyed from hence?"

"Assuredly, I might in that case, ascertain and p int out where I concealed them," was the reply rendered, after a moment's thought.

A hysteric affection struggled audibly in the throat and chest of Martinuzzi; it lasted but an instant; and without speaking another word, he inclosed his daughter's hand in his own, and drawing aside the arras, opened a narrow door, through which he mutely signified his wish to conduct her.

"Whither would you have me accompany you, father?" asked Czerina, hanging back within the threshold, and manifesting no small reluctance to proceed.

"Be still, and confide in me, dearest; this way,—there!—not a word,—do not flurry yourself, all shall yet go well."

Thus saying, Martinuzzi quitted the room, drawing the trembling girl after him. They descended several flights of stairs, and then her venerable guide, hardly less agitated, though from a different cause, than she was herself, led, or rather bore her, through the dreary vaults of Hermanstadt. Ardently as ever father's heart beat in aspirations for his child's happiness, did Martinuzzi desire that Complacency, the stranger, should revisit the bosom of Czerina; but now, one master-thought swayed every faculty of his soul, and drank up all the springs of his being; and his stern self-centred absorption, and apparent disregard of her tottering steps, and almost exanimate condition, during their subterranean progress, may serve to indicate, with what exclusive intentness his whole soul anticipated the recovery, he believed at hand. Martinuzzi was provided with a small lanthern, by whose aid they explored their way, through those obscure and devious avenues. At length, on turning a sudden angle at the termination of a long and narrow passage, they

arrived at the entrance of a dark and noisome vault. They passed within, and Czerina felt the exhalations of the circumjacent walls, pierce through every pore of her flesh. The place struck her, as being obviously more chill and close, than any other she had yet encountered in those caverned regions. The ground was slippery, as well with accumulated dews, as with the loathsome concretions of slime and darkness, that almost covered its clayey surface. In the midst of this dungeon-looking recess, the cardinal made a full pause. He would have dropped the hold which he had of Czerina, but she retained his hand within both of hers, with a convulsive pressure. Raising the lamp on high, Martinuzzi shed its light on those dun and earthy exudations, that saddened the air, which thus, suffused with a "counterfeit" illumination, became the indistinct medium of vision. The gloomy interior of the vault, grew upon the gaze in slow and horrible detail. All was bare, dripping and desolate, and the solitary spot would have seemed for ever to have been unmolested by the tread of man, but for an object, fabricated by human hands, which presently fell within the range of the flickering light,—even that bore a strange correspondence, with the other revolting appurtenances of the cell. *It was a coffin*, which rested against a side of the chamber, near the unpenetrated gloom of the opposite entrance, and which appeared falling to pieces, from the effects of time or accident.

"Look around you, child," whispered Martinuzzi, in a horridly still-strained tone, that almost burst without the bounds of his forced and preternatural calmness.

Czerina, with a wild and troublous expression of countenance, traced the course of the unsteady ray, as it successively pierced the recesses of the vault, but when, at length, the lamp was made to shed its gloomy halo on the delapidated chest, she started back, and her eyes recoiled in inward and uncontrollable affright,—she feebly essayed to indicate with her finger, that decayed receptacle, but

her nerves, which the courses of her past life, and her late dream, had already striken with wildering terror, became at the moment, absolutely bound up in impotence —she shook in every joint,—her hand trembled, and it was in vain she would have raised her arm,—the limb, unequal to the effort, remained just parted from her side, not listless, but paralyzed. Her anxious companion, however, recognised the scareely developed movement, and with the tact, inseparable from high-wrought feelings, divined what was its object. As the light form of his daughter quivered and sunk from his support, he moved a few paces forward, leaving her reeling, while all objects around seemed to recede before her glazed eyeballs. Long Martinuzzi leant over the broken coffin. At that instant the eyes of our heroine rested on a wild form, such as had often troubled her, like an imposture of the memory, to cheat her nights of rest, but which now appeared to rise up on her waking. When from the obscure threshold, that darkly terrible shape emerged into the dim light of the lamp, the closing portent of her last dream was re-enacted. As that dread presentment gradually lost the vagueness of outline it at first bore, it seemed to thrill through the marrow in her bones,—her eye-balls were ready to start and crack their sockets,—she gasped for breath, and with semi-voluntary energy, sought to express the extremity of her dismay, but her voice sunk to a low murmur; and finding she strove in vain, she yielded to the full flood of horror, that hovered upon her soul,—her eyes closed, and her throat choked with emotion; a sickness stole across her heart—she tottered, and the next instant fell exhausted and insensible on the damp ground.

The soul of Martinuzzi, meanwhile, was too intent upon his quest, for him to be aware of what had happened; he peered into the hollow of the coffin, where all viperous and speckled things seemed to have made their nestling

place, but of whatever else he expected to find within that cavity, it was vacant. The papers, which from the slight sign of Czerina, he gleaned had been there deposited, were not visible. Martinuzzi shrunk aghast, and in a tone of bitter disappointment, which his intense emotions bordering on despair, made unconsciously audible, murmured, "Gone! the testimony, that would have redeemed me, mouldered away!—my evil destiny then is too strong for me."

"It might have been, but for a Providence that is sleepless!" spoke a well-known voice in the ear of Martinuzzi: he raised his head, and directed his eyes mournfully, but composedly, towards the person who thus abruptly made her presence manifest. She was the Gipsy Unna. Her features were haggard, and her eyes bloodshot; but in other respects, the wild expression of her countenance seemed effaced by suffering, and her humble mien accorded ill with her usual character, and supernatural pretensions. "You are in search of that roll of writings," she said, after a pause, "which your ill-fated daughter would once have consigned to the decomposition, proper to all things, enclosed in such a chest as that?"

The prelate was silent.

"Know, I arrived on the spot, just in time to witness the act, and avert the destruction. That manuscript in thy hand-writing, I retain in my possession."

"Now, God be thanked!" ejaculated Martinuzzi, with deep and pious emotion.

"Or, at least, I can point out where it is now secured."

"What spot? Is it far from hence?" demanded Martinuzzi, in a breathless voice.

"It is in a secret recess, within the hallowed dome of St. Theresa," replied Unna, "where I meant it to have remained till the day of doom; but now, I care not if you have it back again. In any event, my race will never

reign in Hungary; for, ha! look where the young queen lies withered, and lifeless."

Martinuzzi started, and turned his head. Then he moved to the dark spot, on which his child had fallen, and raising her in his arms, strained her convulsively to his breast. There was a dead pause—how full of painful reflection to both! "Oh God! Is't come to this? Czerina, my pale and blighted girl, sleep you on the chill earth?" mourned the wretched father, after a long silence, in a paroxysm of uncontrollable feeling. "Not there, love, but next my heart,—alas! that's chiller yet!—how happened this? What, still? It is thy father, sweet!—how cold thou art! death is upon thee; oh, my injured child! But wait, and I'll die too—methinks, it now were best to lay me down for ever in this dungeon,—here by thy side, and fail away together,—why should I halt behind i' the world, when thou I loved art ——. No, thou hast not yet wasted away from sight, though, whilst I lock thee in my arms, I feel thee melt from my embrace.* Dear, most dear! all my delight a leaving me—then where, and what's the world?" There followed a long and solemn pause, as Martinuzzi closed his lament; and then abruptly turning to where Unna, much affected, stood attentively regarding him, he resumed, in a cadence of mingled agony and bitterness, "and this is the work of thy insane ambition,—the issue of thy insensate machinations; was it a kind deed of thee?"

"'Twas meant for the best," was the reply, rendered in a more subdued and humane tone of voice, than had issued from the speaker's lips for years; "and if it be reproach, which I will not deny, thou mightest forgive it."

"Oh! pause there," returned Martinuzzi, bitterly. "My sweet child, the thing that lay so near the fibres of my heart, is withering away. Look on her, cruel mother!

* Stringebam brachia, sed jam amiseram quam tenebam.—St. Ambrose, Orat. de Ob. Sat. fr.

Behold this fading flower, over whose lovely promise thy fell interference hath hung, like a chill spell, to spoil or ere it blossomed, before its fragrance quite filled all the air that girt this kingdom. Ay, gaze thy fill. Is it not pitiful?"

Unna remained silent for an instant, ere she replied—"It is accomplished, son—her fate alone remains to be marked on the page of my dark volume, and then, I ween, the history of the race of Thomas Polgar will soon be closed."

"Mother," cried Martinuzzi, in reproachful accents, "you rave the while, Czerina is dying."

"Dying? *Thy* child dying, do you say? Ha! so she is," Unna answered in a low hollow broken tone, as if her thoughts were wandering. She paused, and then, with a soul-harrowing shriek, that had something in it almost frantic, suddenly burst out—"And where is mine, then? Mine! my Alaric—my brave and peerless Alaric! All slurred and bloody, buried deep in the rank mould of the battle field! Oh God, this marble heart!—dead! dead! dead!—and I, the unhappy parent of a blighted race, withstand these tempests calmly. I do not shed a tear, and yet in how profound a gulph I'm sunk! Not thought can fathom an abyss more dire of wretchedness. When thou consignest the freckless tint, in which the charm of that maiden's cheek is painted, to become the spoil of every foul and wormy thing, that mars the honoured covert of a monument,—oh! then remember what I suffer;—think of thy brother's despised resting-place, nor dare, for thy soul's purchase to arraign my acts at the tribunal of thy judgment, nor imagine a harsh thought against thy stricken mother. Thou hast, at least, atonement."

Martinuzzi made no answer; his soul was all intent upon his child,—his heart too full of anguish for speech.—After a moment, he turned away, and directed

his course, with Czerina in his arms, towards the cathedral church.

Unna remained in momentary forgetfulness, and then, with absorbed air, woe-fraught visage, and feelings and remembrances tugging at her heart strings, which, if we even dared to describe, would defy our analysis, she roused herself to follow, with exequial tread, her eldest born, her justly celebrated, but smitten, broken-hearted son.

## MANUSCRIPT XXXIII.

"Princeps induetur mœrore, et manus populi terræ conturbabuntur."

EZEKIEL, vii. 27.

"Venez voir le peu qui nous reste de tante de grandeur."

BOSSUET, *Oraison Funebre.*

"Ne'er to these chambers, where the mighty rest,
Since their foundation, came a nobler guest;
Nor e'er was to the bowers of bliss convey'd,
A fairer spirit, or more welcome shade."

TICKELL.

"He might have been a king,
But that he understood
How much it is a meaner thing,
To be unjustly great, than honorably good."

BUCKINGHAM.

IN an ancient and desolate apartment, attached to one of the side aisles of the cathedral, paced the stately and military figure of our hero. He was occupied, as may well be believed, in no agreeable meditations; his power was past; he was the prisoner of his arch-enemy, who would, doubtless, without scruple, consummate his long projected usurpation in the blood of his benefactor's son. The knowledge of his lineage, and the operation of late events, had contributed rather to strengthen, than to

dissipate the prejudice and enmity to Martinuzzi, which had been so artfully instilled into our hero's mind, in his boyhood. Influenced by the advice and argument of Luke Swartz, he had disguised his superior endowments, beneath the impenetrable cloak of mental imbecility. He trusted, by this means, to avert from himself a similar fate to that, which had overtaken the venerable Count Rodna, whose murder was attributed to the orders of the regent. He was led to apprehend, that Martinuzzi, having, in some way not explained to him, done him irreparable injury in infancy, would certainly cause his being put to death before he attained the age of manhood, unless the semblance of foolishness, to which he fashioned his behaviour, should ascertain his safety in contempt. " Contemptuque tutus esse ubi ex industria factus ad imitationem stultitiæ."

Sigismund, plunged in painful musing, gave no heed to the insurrectionary uproar, that, for a considerable time, had penetrated even his remote retreat, and his attention was only, at length, diverted from his own indignant reflections, by the withdrawing of the outward bolt, which secured the low door of his place of durance. On its hinges slowly revolving, Cardinal Martinuzzi was discovered in the act of reverting his head, to address Baron Bathori, who stood a few paces beyond the threshold.

" You will please place yourself, baron, at the head of what troops are in the castle. March them straight hitherward, and have them drawn up in front of the cathedral gates ; — but, hold ! perchance the present disorders of the city may infer the possibility of bloodshed ; — I would not for the world incur that danger."

" The tumult is fast subsiding," replied Bathori ; " I will answer with that life, your eminence so nobly rescued from the flames, to conduct a guard hither, without their encountering the slightest let or hindrance, during their passage."

" You are very good," returned the prelate, with his usual faint and condescending smile ; " see to it, then, my lord, and forthwith despatch the task I have enjoined." Uttering these words, Martinuzzi, with composed and holy mien, passed into the chamber, and closed the door after him.

Sigismund recoiled one or two paces, on first beholding the person of his conqueror, and then, with reserved and haughty gesture, drawing himself up to his full height, and, silently bending his eyes upon the prelate, he seemed, by his looks, to demand the motive of his visit. This lasted for a while, but Martinuzzi, remaining in a fixed attitude, and not immediately speaking, our hero first broke the deep, and almost awful silence by observing, with the calm, cold air, of a man deeply convinced of his companion's baseness, yet holding him and his utmost malice in too great scorn, to let them ruffle his constant temper. " I am scarcely ignorant of your purpose in ordering out the castle guard ; — you will find me, sir, encounter death as becomes the son of my father, though, I confess, I would have more willingly met him on the field of battle."

" You DO, then, know who was your father ?" said Martinuzzi, without making a more direct reply.

" Your sovereign, sir, whilst he lived," returned Sigismund, haughtily ; — " dost not blush to name him ?"

" It is necessary, that we at length come to an understanding," said the regent, after a pause ; " the time, and the occasion of our interview, equally demand it ; and you, my lord, will be pleased to bear with me, while I enter on an explanation of the past."

" I must needs hear what you presume to deliver," rejoined Sigismund, bitterly, at the same time scanning significantly with his eyes, the circumference of his prison, — " these walls are not so wide, to leave me an option."

" You will please to be seated," said Martinuzzi, who,

in the earnestness of his present purpose, either overlooked, or deigned not to take notice of the disrespectful tone and manner of his youthful interlocutor.

" Nay," replied Sigismund, sneeringly, " this posture best accords with our present relations ; 'twere unseemly for a man, who hath outlived fortune, to sit in the presence of his victor."

" In this, and all things else, be it according to thy will," returned Martinuzzi, with stately and pensive reserve. " Stand then, sir, and hear the complaints of a man, undone by thy subterfuge, and the duplicity with which thou hast conducted thyself, in thy dealings with him."

Sigismund looked astonished for a moment, but preserved a contemptuous silence.

Martinuzzi continued ; " Thou hast inflicted an injury upon me, which not all the means and havings of thy greatness can ever redress."

Sigismund again smiled his incredulity, but did not answer.

" What are the gifts of princes ?" proceeded the regent, with animation, — " wealth, power, and dignity. I have tried and proved their nothingness : still men think much of these baubles ; and thy father, Sigismund, only measured the extent of his bounties, by the capacity of his friendship ; — his nature was godlike, and he showered his trusts upon me, with the liberality of Heaven. But two blessings, sir, were mine, which transcend all other earthly acquisitions,—blessings, with which King John of Zapola could not endow me, because they lie not in the gift of potentates ; the one, sir, was my fair repute and unsullied character in the world's regard, — a possession beyond the purchase of mere wealth and fortune, and such as kings might envy, but never confer. This happiness I conquered for myself, how truly and without alloy, I need but appeal to the universal voice, not of Hungary, but of Europe. — Nay, sir, I must be heard

out. — For the other blessing, which I name, I stood indebted to the King of kings, — it consisted in the feeling of parental love, with which I contemplated the health and happiness of one dear child."

Martinuzzi's tones faltered ; he stopped, but almost instantly, with firmer voice, resumed —

" Pomp, and power, and high authority, were the largesses of thy royal sire ; but the two pillars, on which the edifice of my glory found support, were my consciousness of honourable fame, and interest in the Lady Czerina. These, sir, you undermined and shattered to their foundation. You have spoiled the honours your sire built up in me, and crumbled to dust those columns, on which, as in air, the fabric of my prosperity rested. You have beggared me without a fault ; have undone your father's work ; and, not only have stripped from my reaching branches the fair leaves of promise, but condemned me henceforth to such a wintry barrenness, that I have nothing left, I can call my own, save reverence for myself, and integrity in His sight, unto whom the vanities and affections of earth as vainly appeal, as the waves of a troubled sea lift up to heaven."

Deep, and solemn, beyond expression, were the tones in which Martinuzzi delivered the foregoing, and, when he ceased, and looked to Sigismund, as if for a reply, his voice still seemed to be speaking. That youth stood, lost, and absorbed in thought, and in an attitude, as if eager to catch more of those organ sounds, which, though he hardly understood their drift, he felt were based on truth as firm, as the pillars of creation.

A thrilling silence ensued, which it was some minutes ere Sigismund could prevail on himself to break. At length, in an embarrassed manner, and with an expression of countenance, much less assured than what he exhibited on the entrance of the regent, he observed, though still with coldness, " Your eminence must surely err the while, in your statement of our relative position. —

I, the oppressor! — no, sir, it is not I, that have beggared thee; — bethink thyself."

"What fiend was it, Sigismund, whispered in thy ear," returned the prelate, "to practise on my credulity? But for thy long, and fatal imposition, death might not now prefer a claim, to mar my earthly peace, nor would dishonour set his brand upon the front of Martinuzzi. Why, why didst pretend unto the world, thy reason was unsettled?"

"That my life might not be drawn to an untimely close, to assure his impunity, who meant to stamp, with the royal seal of Hungary, his daughter's usurping brow," answered Sigismund; "and, if the policy of the proceeding was not all along self-evident," he continued, after a short pause, "do not my late defeat and present bondage justify, at length, the apprehension that dictated my disguise?"

"Fatal mistrust!" exclaimed Martinuzzi, — "wound up, and incorporate, I perceive, with your young and growing reason, under the malign auspices of Luke Swartz, who presumed to judge of my purposes, by his own bad and ingrateful nature. Your discomfiture this day, sir, involved the destruction of those marauding bands, who are the worst enemies of Hungary; and that you are here alive, to upbraid the preserver of your father's kingdom, and the upholder of his sceptre and its independence, you owe to my interposition, who, ere we joined in battle, gave directions, that, at whatever cost, the Richter Iwan was to be brought, unharmed and scathless, into my presence. We are met, sir, and I am thus enabled to make that restitution, to the rightful heir of Hungary and Transylvania, which, until this day, from the hour of your highness's birth, I have had no opportunity of doing. At the threshold of life, without any intervention of mine, you were defrauded of your royal birthright. During your early boyhood, important reasons, which I will explain, recommended silence;

nor, indeed, was there, at that time, any immediate necessity for my divulging the secret; then intervened your fatal pretence of an alienated mind, frustrating all my projects, and driving me to persist in maintaining a deception, which has proved the canker-worm of my past life, and the consequence of which will speedily consign me to a dishonoured grave."

A strong and evident impression was produced upon the eloquent countenance of Sigismund, by the words of Martinuzzi. His bosom heaved, and his features worked almost convulsively. After a moment's pause, with emotion that visibly mocked his every effort to control, he repeated the words, "*Without any intervention of your lordship!* — How can it be? Wert thou clear in this,.. so perfect in all else! so like a god! I've surely not been under a misconception for so many years — no, no — I'll not believe it. You pretend this now, indeed — it may suit your present purposes; perhaps your heart may have relented, but you cannot have meant uprightly in my boyhood — it is impossible. Then say, your eminence, —"

He broke off abruptly, for even as he spake, he caught the glorious steadfastness of Martinuzzi's eye, and marked his calm, melancholy, but proud smile. Conviction, like an intuitive inspiration from Heaven, shot into the gazer's soul; his cheek grew suddenly and startlingly pale, and he burst into tears, as seizing the regent by the hand, the Richter Iwan resumed, with faltering, quivering lip —

"Oh God! I must believe your eminence — *that look!* —yet, yet say — can you give me any proof you meant me fairly?"

Martinuzzi extricated his hand, from the unconscious pressure of his companion, and, placing it within his vest, drew from thence a roll of papers. Slowly he unfolded it before the eyes of Sigismund, and raising the document, pointed, with his right hand, to some words,

inscribed at the bottom of one of the pages. Sigismund started—the effect was electrical.

"Do you recognise this appellation, sir?" demanded Martinuzzi. "Do you remember your signature?"

"*Iwan Sigismund*," dropped faintly from the lips of our hero. "I do remember the circumstance of my subscription — it was that night, when ——"

"Sir," interrupted Martinuzzi, in a solemn voice, and with a mien inexpressibly majestical, "if you recollect so much, you no doubt can call to memory the observation, I then made to you, in the presence of that venerable exile, soon to be hurried to his recompence in another world. I then informed you, that these writings were intended to remedy the evil, consequent upon a most base and dark conspiracy; — to vindicate the conduct of an involuntary accomplice thereof, from much misrepresentation, and rescue his name from eventual obloquy. You demurred to the obscurity of my language, and I promised, when next you cast eyes upon these three signatures—James Stuart, Iwan Sigismund, and George Martinuzzi—that that obscurity would be illumined, and you become cognizant of the purport of these papers. It is for that purpose you are here, my lord; it is for that purpose I have brought them with me;—but let me add, these writings, which include my last testament, and an apograph of the confession of Swartz's sister, were meant to be consigned to the archives of Coloswar, lest a sudden death, or other accident, should prevent me, during my life, from performing that justice, I therein, as you will see, meditated. But on the very day, which would have preceded the execution of my contemplated purpose, this roll, by some strange agency, was removed out of my keeping, and only within this hour, most providentially, and almost miraculously, have I recovered possession of it. Receive at my hands, noble sir, the instrument, which at once certifies you of your rights, and

contains the apology of my life. The injury to my unspotted name, which your pretence of insanity will have been the occasion of, can never be perfectly redressed; but there is a justice due to yourself, which must, at all risks, be this day seen to. I go hence, to bid the corps-de-garde, I have ordered out, prepare to escort you at your leisure to the citadel, where I will myself present you to the people, and cause the son of my royal patron, John of Zapola, to be proclaimed, in my presence, the king of Hungary and Transylvania."

The roll of papers, which Sigismund had taken, dropped, from his relaxed hold, upon the floor. He had not read a syllable, but he felt, with a confirmation, as strong and assured, as was his faith in the truths of holy writ, that they contained the justification of the regent. He moved towards him, and would have fallen at his feet.

"Nay, son of the dearest and truest friend I ever owned," cried Martinuzzi, "kneel not to me; that posture is properly mine, and anon, in the face of day, I will, as becomes my station, be the first of your liege's subjects, who will assume it. As yet, you have only my word for my integrity; read, sire, the papers, and I pray thee in the meanwhile, excuse my retiring to an adjoining chamber, where a young and guileless maiden momentarily awaiteth the invitation of the destroyer, to that dark sojourn, whither I cannot yet penetrate, however longing to accompany her. I would wish, that she breathe out her last sigh in her father's bosom; and permit me, sire, for that melancholy purpose, at present to withdraw."

In uttering these words, Martinuzzi's lip quivered, and his countenance grew paler; otherwise his manner and voice were calm. Sigismund, struck aghast with surprise, could not immediately reply, and while he paused, in doubt and agitation, the regent made a profound obeisance, and quitted the room.

During the progress of these volumes, we sometimes contemplated, with peculiar complacency, having to introduce, towards the denouement of our tale, the exposition of his future views, and past conduct, made by Martinuzzi, shortly after the demise of King John; together with those reflections and observations on his peculiar situation, which, on the death of Alicia, and subsequently on divers occasions, he committed to paper. It now seems that we were, so to speak, cheered forward on our voluntary way, (as in the journey of life, men "fardels bear,"

> "In prospect of some gilded, baseless goal,
> Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky,"*)

by an anticipated satisfaction, which, on a nearer approach, hath changed its aspect, and which we are fated never to repair.

We have only left space for a bare epitome of those expository documents, which our hero is about to peruse. Our inadvertence, however, is the less to be regretted, since, were we to give Martinuzzi's relation of these transactions entire, it would be to make a resumé of many of the incidents of our story. We shall confine ourselves to extracting from his narrative, those few essential passages, which tend to elucidate the main intricacies of our plot, trusting that all minor difficulties have been, long since, surmounted by the reader's own sagacity.

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> "Tu mihi, et qui te sapientium mentibus inseruit Deus, estis conscii, nullum me ad magistratum, nisi commune bonorum omnium studium, detulisse."
>
> BOETHIUS, *de Consol. Philos. b.* 1.

"HAVING been appointed regent of these kingdoms, under peculiar circumstances, I deem it incumbent on

* Campbell.

me to insert, in my last solemn testament, the important disclosures which follow, lest inscrutable Providence disable me, during my mortal course, from effecting that measure of justice, which it is the earnest desire, and fixed purpose, of my soul, to accomplish, at what time, and after what mode, may seem in my judgment most seasonable and expedient."

After this preamble, Martinuzzi goes on to acknowledge his early secret marriage, with the Princess Beatrice; and, adverting to their separation, and their cohabitation, subsequent to his having taken orders, he insists upon the legality of that re-union. He then, after mentioning the nearly simultaneous occurrence of the queen's and the princess's accouchemens, thus proceeds :—

"It so chanced that, on the eventful day which ushered into the world these royal cousins, affairs of state detained me at Pesth. On my return, a few days afterwards, I was informed that the princess wished me, immediately, to go to her. When I reached the bedside, Beatrice threw her arms convulsively round my neck, and deluged me with her tears. Whatever grief her emotion caused me, even its excess excited no suspicion; our child had been born in the interval of my absence, and that child, as was previously determined on, had been consigned to the gipsy Unna, to cause to be conveyed to the chateau of my friend, Count Rodna, who was already instructed to expect the arrival of the infant stranger. This separation sufficiently accounted for Beatrice's distress, though scarcely for its continuance and intensity. In vain I implored her to be calm,— she would not be consoled. Time rolled on, only marked by the regular vibrations of her sobs, and the loud pulsation of her heart. My anxiety deepened into alarm,— my alarm was aggravated into distracting fears. I could obtain no explanation, save what was couched in moans,

or piteous phrases, such as 'Forgive me, George! I have deceived,— destroyed you!'

"Frantically, but in vain, I begged her to be more explicit. At every entreaty her lamentations were redoubled. Unna entered, and, too soon, the dreadful solution of Beatrice's anguish was afforded me. My child I found had been substituted for the royal heir of Hungary, and the son of King John was already far on the road to the chateau of Count Rodna. I stood, for a considerable time, upon hearing this acknowledgment, as one in whose sentient being, the light of mental and physical existence had been suddenly extinguished. Slowly the fatal truth redawned. My life of life, my unblemished honour, was compromised; never, probably, to be wholly re-established. I will not,— I cannot dwell upon my sufferings ——.

"Indignant was my wrath, and I signified my intention, immediately on his majesty's return, to lay before him and the states, the whole particulars of their conspiracy. Whereupon, the princess slid from her couch, and conjured me, on her knees, to spare her, and the gipsy's life;—their crime was treason, and —— I waited not to hear her to an end, but quitted her in her tears, and her convulsions.

"The bitterness of my first agony had not subsided, when the fatal intelligence reached Buda of King John's demise. This event, by changing the aspect of affairs, wrought a material alteration in my views and conduct. Whilst armed with the rights and title of regent of Hungary, I conceived that it might be in my power, to uphold the integrity of the kingdom, despite the ambitious views of neighbouriug potentates, and so preserve the crown of St. Stephen, for the son of my departed friend; but there was no other man possessed of the vigilance and spirit of command that the necessities of that time required; a darkness loured over the whole region, and

none, save myself, was capable to take the helm at that critical period. Count Pereny was with the invader: even Count Turascus trembled; he despaired, —

" Italiam contingere vento;
Nec meminisse viæ media Palinurus in undâ."

I clearly foreboded, in the event of my resigning my regal functions, — which, as I held them in the name of the Lady Czerina, and not of Sigismund, I should be necessitated to do, in case I divulged her mother's crime, — that the vessel of the state must be overwhelmed by conflicting interests, and so suffer shipwreck.

" Thus unhappily circumstanced, after a long struggle with my inward soul, I decided to immolate that keen sense of honour, on which, perhaps, I too much prided myself, on the altar of my country's good. I cannot,— words are too feeble to represent my feelings;—I cannot pourtray the total revolution which took place in my inward being, from the moment I submitted, voluntarily, to be an accomplice in a treasonous deed. Life, for me, thenceforth, lost all the gloss that lent it all its value. I felt degraded in my own eyes, from very apprehension lest I might hereafter become so, in the estimation of my fellow-men; and I can only hope, that Sigismund will reap all the benefit of this exenteration of my bosom. Mournful, indeed, will be my lot, if it shall prove that, either for him or Hungary, I have sacrificed myself in vain.

* * * * * *

" What avails my determination of disclosing this transaction to the diet, as soon as circumstances will admit of it? — it brings no balm to the wound that rankles in my breast. Men will one day learn I have stooped my character to the enormity of subterfuge. My own flesh and blood stands aloft, on the pillory of a throne; and I read upon her innocent brow, in characters of fire, the word LIE branded! No, in this life, my heart can never more know peace. I have hardly

committed an act of sin ; nevertheless the stings of con science penetrate through the fibres of my soul, and every sensible pore weeps tears of blood."

The instrument goes on to narrate, how for years subsequent to the death of King John, the state of affairs continued such, as to render the publication of the Princess Beatrice's treason, a matter, so teeming with danger, and pregnant with national convulsion, that Martinuzzi feared his making the discovery would be subversive of the very object, his concealment was meant to subserve. Then after noticing the abduction of the princess, mentioning the place where she was to be found, and supplying the requisite evidence, to ascertain and identify the principal party, the regent thus concluded :—

" I shall forthwith betake me to the chateau near Coloswar, where Prince Sigismund, the son of the late King John and Isabella, at present resides, and having caused Count Rodna and the prince, to witness this eviction of my innocence, I purpose, after making a transcript, depositing the record among certain other memorials, which, it will be necessary should be read, whenever it shall please Almighty God to call me from my probation ; and finally, since the state of the Princess Beatrice's intellect will defend her from punishment, I can only solemnly adjure the states of Tran sylvania, and Prince Sigismund, whose good, next to that of my country, I have consulted in this matter, not to visit the crime of the parent upon the unoffending head of my beloved child. If I shall be judged to have done aught memorable, or worthy of being engraven on the minds of living men, I wish not to have ensculptured in cold and feeble imagery, my victories and my laws, for posterity to worship at my trophied tomb, but I bequeath the Lady Czerina, as a living escutcheon, to the country I have saved."

The other memoranda accompanying this document were composed at sundry subsequent periods. One of these, referring to the death of Alicia, and professing the writer's previous ignorance of her attachment, attributes the detention of the maiden among the Cyganis, (of which circumstance Martinuzzi was at the time unaware,) to Unna's apprehension of her betraying to the world, her knowledge of the transposition of the children. Martinuzzi's communication to Alicia, upon which she grounded her belief of his guilt, merely bore reference to her having to deliver his own child to Unna, to be conveyed away to Count Rodna.

A paper, written on first receiving information from Swartz of Sigismund's insanity, depicts the horror, with which this event overwhelmed Martinuzzi. The delicacy of his position became complicated in the extreme,—he contemplated in a few months disembarrassing himself of the clouds of error and mystery, which, without a fault or error on his part, obstructed and obscured the walk of his soul, when this lamentable accident came to frustrate all his plans. — His child, besides, was now growing up to woman's estate, and his affection forbad his letting her build her nest upon the seat of kings, lest sovereignty should become her familiar; so that when he, at length, sought to reduce her to the level of a subject, he should find the accidents of royal state, incorporate with her being. The measure could not, with a prospective eye to the happiness of her future life, be much longer postponed,—and yet, how now could the announcement be made, and to what end? since according to the laws, the Palatine, or otherwise, that office being unoccupied, the archbishop of Strigonie, (which see Martinuzzi held,) was entitled and authorised to assume the regency. What good purpose could it answer to plunge the country into convulsion, by the promulgation of treason past, and irremediable? Prince Sigismund, under his auspices and the counsels of ministers of his choosing,

might indeed, have held his way through the storm and dangers of the times; but, wherefore, should Martinuzzi weaken the basis of his own strength, when there was no other man in the state, capable of upholding the powers of government?

It was about this time, after serious cogitation, and much inward misgiving, believing that Sigismund's mental alienation rendered him for ever incapable to advantage, by the restitution originally contemplated, and seeing no other way to break the fall of Czerina, or to hold together the discordant elements that composed the fabric of the state, that Martinuzzi first conceived the idea,—conformably to the course which he found recommended by his favourite philosopher,* under such contingency, of taking the sovereignty upon himself, and perhaps of transmitting it to the Lady Czerina, in his right, instead of in that of John of Zapola. The question was not whether he and his daughter should retire into private life: how gladly would Martinuzzi have embraced that alternative, but he could not, after Sigismund's malady intervened, decline the burden of government, without making Transylvania one scene of commotion and bloodshed. The only point, which, owing to the state of parties, and the fortuitous concurrence of jostling circumstances, he had to decide, was by what title he would consent to hold the sceptre. To promulge the treason of the princess, and retain the regency, by right of the see of Strigonie, would be to undermine the foundation of his authority, and were doubtfully to put off the evil day of anarchy, without any countervailing advantage. He resolved, therefore, to let matters take their course, to seize the earliest favourable occasion, himself to dethrone his daughter, and not to leave it after his death, for an act of duty or of treason, to rougher hands, to hurl her from her greatness,—so that if any light should hereafter

* Plato; see Dial. 6 De Repub.

be thrown upon the dark origin of her sovereignty, she would be already transplanted, by marriage or otherwise, from the invidious and slippery pinnacle of a throne, whither, however humble perchance her domicile, her footing would be sure, and safe, and stable. Such appeared Martinuzzi's policy, but days and weeks, and months elapsed, and these, like successive waves, interrolled onwards, swallowed up by the gulph of years, and still no opportunity presented itself to him, without hazarding a convulsion, of executing any measure that might infringe upon, or affect the ostensible rights and interests of his daughter,—her very popularity thwarted his design, and militated against her ultimate happiness. But while the lapse of time seemed to consolidate his greatness and his power, the authority of the regent, in reality, grew daily more precarious, and as he felt its basis crumble beneath him, his sensibility, which was of the finest temper, and never framed to be subject to such cruel visitations, was continually excruciated in proportion, as it grew more exquisite. The scorpion terrors attached to undivulged crimes ever haunted him, and without having committed a single act of wickedness, or scarcely even lapsed into error, he was reaping the bitter penalty of guilt, after a mode of refinement, to which the hardened nature of a real criminal could never be obnoxious.

It was not long after the occurrence of Sigismund's malady, that the horrors of Martinuzzi's situation were heightened in consequence of his brother, Ragotzy, who was unconscious of their relationship, and who was then his secretary, purloining the confession of Alicia, and some other papers from the secret drawer of a cabinet. This loss, combined with the unaccountable disappearing from the floor, during Czerina's interview with her mother, of the important document, which we have just abstracted, seemed to enhance the danger of the regent, and multiply the tremendous hazards of his

position. Although he became not cognizant of the existence of a son of John of Zapola, Ragotzy learned enough, in ascertaining the rottenness of our heroine's title, to embitter the moments of her father, till, as his victim declared to him, in an early manuscript, it would have been a mercy had he cut direct into his heart with a quick steel, so he had perished once, and felt not death dropping for ever from his perjured lips.

Meanwhile, as circumstances seemed to increase the chances of a discovery, which were it brought about by the interference of others, Martinuzzi felt that hardly any explanation, which he could give, would suffice to retrieve his character, his longing desire, that at least, his daughter should be placed beyond the reach of a single contretems daily augmented, but up to the date of the opening of our story, no opportunity had presented itself of accomplishing his wishes.

With every year's delay, the difficulty attendant on the *coup d'etat* he meditated, became greater, and the risk to the peace of mind of Czerina, were he suddenly to dissever her from all those associations and habits of royalty, in which she had been nourished and brought up, grew critically imminent. He would have confessed to her the facts of her involuntary usurpation, and so gently prepared her for the fall from power, which he believed, sooner or later, inevitable, but he was apprehensive, that her pride would disdain to any longer arrogate honors, to which she knew she had no real claim; and thus his premature revelation would tend to precipitate the universal anarchy he had hitherto warded off. He could only, therefore, break the impending blow, by causing those reports of his design, at no distant period, to make himself king, to reach her ears through so many and various channels, that she could hardly fail to believe they had some foundation; and, by his stern and inflexible deportment, during their hours of business or intercourse (wherein sometimes he found it a hardness to

dissemble), to render the idea of state details and cares, rather irksome than agreeable to the imagination.

This proceeding, so far as it tamed down any overweening hopes, of what the future had in store for her, answered the desired end; but the breath of rumour struck chill upon our heroine, as all the winds of winter had thrown cold upon her heart; and the presence of her guardian, indescribably stately, solemn, and reserved, came, like a spell of power, to whisper, in melancholy accents, his fascinated and unhappy child to marble. His temper, moreover, at every fresh meeting, seemed to grow more unequal; for his momentary liability to disgrace, from the false motives, which would be sure to be imputed to him, in the event of an exposure, wrought upon his delicate sensibility, and nice sense of honour, even, as we have seen, to the verge of madness. — "Ah! quelle grande victime se sacrifie au bien public."*

This state of irritable emotion, and susceptibility to every casual impression, found of late, fresh food in an occurrence, which we cursorily noticed in our earlier manuscripts. Pereny, in the guise of Father Dominick, picked up, on the ramparts of the citadel, a note, which Swartz had dropped, addressed to his pseudo-keeper from the Richter Iwan. The graf immediately laid it before Martinuzzi, in whose mind, it was what first suggested the possibility, of that man's having betrayed him, — a suspicion, which appeared to receive confirmation, soon after, by his flight. This incident completed the turmoil and distraction, in the secret depths of Martinuzzi's soul. He offered a considerable reward for the apprehension of the keeper, though it would have been difficult for him to have explained what was his object; and his marked trepidation upon this subject, and evident desire to seize upon

* Bossuet.

Swartz's person, he was at the pains to interpret to Pereny and others, by imputing to that man treasonable practices against the state, — an allegation which failed to impose upon Pereny, who surmised what were the real causes of Martinuzzi's unwonted manifestations of anxiety.

Then followed the obtrusion of the Duke of Eissenburg; and the startling discovery of that noble's being in possession of the secret of Alicia's confession, which, as an *exparte* statement, involved such weighty charges against Martinuzzi's honour. What wonder that his starts of horror, passion, and affright, lest the world should be surreptitiously instructed in regard to those transactions, and so, upon plausible evidence, conceive him capable of guilt of such a die, should have all the sensitive character, and fierce colouring, proper to the paroxysms of the real criminal, similarly circumstanced?

The same observation applies to his last interview with Pereny; and, on that occasion, to such a degree was his mind upset, that it was not until the gentle influence of a communion with Heaven had allayed his spirit to peace, that the thought of the redemption, contained in the fact of Sigismund's not being insane, fell, like a ray of light, upon the dark and troubled waters of his soul. He instantaneously conceived the course of action, it behoved him to pursue, and, the same night, he achieved his object, with his wonted Nelson-like audacity. The heir of the kingdom once in his custody, it was his intention to submit for his consideration, a copy of the narrative, which he had lost, containing the evidence of Sigismund's title, together with the several supplements which went to elucidate the motive of his (Martinuzzi's) subsequent conduct. The timely recovery of the missing document, he trusted, would put his innocence of purpose to a proof, which would not admit of the shadow of a doubt, and in this hope he left our hero, to peruse, in

full, that evidence, of which the foregoing is a brief summary.

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We approach the conclusion of our tale. As Martinuzzi, after quitting his prisoner, musingly paced the side aisle of the cathedral, he was suddenly set upon, from behind, by an assassin, who, aiming a blow at him over the shoulder, drove his dagger up to the hilt, into his breast. The regent turned, with the purpose of grappling with his assailant, when he beheld a vision, which like that of the gorgon, paralyzed every nerve, and momentarily transfixed him where he stood, to stone. The assassin was about to repeat his mortal stroke, but in the act, he felt his bare right wrist seized, and entwined within the firm clip of taper icy fingers, which sent a chill through all his veins, as they closed upon him; he strove to wrench his arm from that unyielding gripe, but found the effort at first beyond his strength,—he reverted his gaze, and his startled eye lit upon the attenuated white shape, and outstretched limbs of a being, *no longer of this world*. The spectacle presented all the appearance of vital emotion, after the functions of life were suspended by the glacial touch of death; like some emanation of embodied vapour, on a sudden congealed to ice. Thus stood the lovely dust, *which was once our heroine*, after the spirit had departed. Her lips were apart, and might seem to the deaf to utter sounds; her glazed eyeballs started from their sockets,—her hair was dishevelled,—every feature in agitation,—every muscle at work. She seemed for a minute to be standing on tiptoe, but her body leant against a pillar, from which her form appeared to emerge, like an image of sculpture, in full relief. The assassin recognised whose figure it was, just as Martinuzzi caught her in his arms, and fell with her on the pavement. Antoine Ferraro leant over his victims.

At that moment, the corps de garde, under the command of Bathori, defiled through the cathedral gates, and descrying the wretched group a few paces off, marched up to the fatal spot. There was no need of explanation,—the bleeding form of the regent,—the lifeless creature he madly clasped to his heart, and the still-stricken posture of the murderer, holding the gory evidence of his guilt in his hand, told their own tale. By Bathori's orders, Ferraro's person was instantly attached.

"What madness caused this tragedy?" he demanded, in a tone of sorrowful reproach.

"Revenge!" replied Ferraro! "the tyrant killed my father."

"Your father?"

"Ay, the graf, Peter Pereny, this noon, at the postern of the palace."

"Rash, misguided man!" exclaimed Bathori; "I witnessed, from the casement of my prison, the deed you mention; it was not the hand of his eminence struck the blow, but that of the Marquis Piadena. I saw the murderer's face at the moment, and I'll swear it was no other than Castaldo."

"Great God! my senses wander.—Impossible! that very dagger, found in my father's body, has the name of Martinuzzi graven on its hilt."

"Reach me the poignard, Bathori," said the dying regent, in feeble accents; "Castaldo wrenched this weapon from my person, at Coloswar," he added, after inspecting it for an instant.

Ferraro covered his face with his hands, and groaned audibly.

"But I am not long for life," continued Martinuzzi; "let me not waste the precious minutes. Some of you summon the magnats, and such as hold authority at this hour; and you, Bathori, bid the Richter Iwan hither,—you will find him in that chamber."

Agreeably to these directions, the body of the church was soon crowded, and Sigismund rushed, at the first notice, to the fallen cardinal, and prostrated himself on one knee beside him.

"Nobles of Hungary! and citizens of Hermanstadt!" exclaimed Martinuzzi, collecting his last expiring breath, for the effort; "behold the son of John and Isabella, in the Richter Iwan! He is your king,—I acknowledge his claims,—he will explain all to you, and ——, and absolve me ——, Sigismund!——" and Martinuzzi grasped our hero's hand, with the convulsive energy of a dying man. "You will save my honour,—and clear me,—will you not?—to Hungary,—to Europe,—to the whole world,—to posterity. My name, oh! let it not be breathed upon!—Czerina,—I'll not be long,—my country.—my honour, Sigismund, my hon—!" These were the last words of George Martinuzzi.—"*Revertatur ad terram suam: spiritus redeat ad Deum, qui dedit illum.*"*

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As Ferraro, in a state of mind which may be imagined, but which we will not stop to describe, was being borne out of the cathedral gates, under the escort of the guard, a voice whispered in his ear. He turned his head, and his eye was transfixed, by the blinding lustre of Isabella's triumphant smile.

"Know you," she asked, "what caused the death of yonder blighted flower?"

"Madam?" said Ferraro.

"You broke her heart,—*you*,—you, Ferraro, *what time you stabbed her father*. Now, fool! go to prison;" and casting one last, demoniacal glance upon her victim, which curdled his blood, the haughty dowager passed on, in apparent triumph,.. a triumph, which none could

* Ecclesiastes, c. xii. v. 8.

envy, and which the reader, pitying, not condemning, the transitory passions of humanity, must leave her to settle, as she can, with her God.

Castaldo found means, during the conflagration, to escape from the palace; and, on learning that Martinuzzi ("de scitu et mandata Ferdinandi") was slain, he fled, conscience stricken, from Hermanstadt.*

On the night succeeding the following day, an Emir, attended by a small train of followers, rode up to the ramparts, and requested speech of Iwan. He was admitted, and our hero advanced to welcome him to Hermanstadt, with every demonstration of respect.

"I make this visit," said the Ottoman, after a short previous parley, "with the view of acknowledging that vast obligation, under which you once laid me, by preserving my life."

Iwan looked surprised.

The Emir paused; but, presently, thus proceeded:— "It is contrary to our institutions, you must be informed, for the soldan to sojourn within the walls of any var, or city, but what is his own, by right of conquest, or inheritance; so, on a late occasion, I found myself under the necessity of bivouacking without these walls, while the greater part of my retinue, pitched their pavilions upon the site of certain dilapidated demesnes, within an arrow's flight of this citadel. In preparing the foundations of their temporary residence, certain of my followers lit upon this casket, and straightwise brought it to me. Accept it at my hands:" and the speaker presented Sigismund with an iron box. "You will find it to contain the only gift, worthy of Sultan Solyman to make, to the son of his fast friend, John of Zapola;—THE

* Castaldus vixdum patrato facinore, sibi male metuens, festinus cibinium abiit omnesque cogitationes in se ipso, si quid forte turbarum a Transilvaniis Georgii Martinusii nece efferatis, incidissit.

CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN—THE REGALIA OF HUNGARY!*—I will be with you at your coronation."

The body of Cardinal Martinuzzi was interred with great pomp and solemnity, in the cathedral of Alba Julia, whither it was conveyed in sumptuous state, amidst the tears and lamentations of the whole province. The mightiest in the land, were proud to bear his hearse; and as the long-drawn funeral train, mid the stately tapers, the passing knell, the swelling anthem, and requiem of chaunting litanies, moved through the shadowy aisle, the eye missed nothing of glory in his sad solemnities, *save himself alone*.† His ashes repose by the side of those of the greatest man, next himself, that Hungary ever produced, the famous John Huniades Corvin.

For months after the celebration of his obsequies, there was a confluence of people from all parts, to Alba Julia, to behold the sepulchre of their beloved regent, with his particular trophies suspended over it. There divers miracles were wrought, and, from dawn of day till nightfall, the holy crypt was crowded.

One afternoon, towards twilight, an aged female, tall, and closely enveloped in her mantle, was heard to laugh hysterically, as she joined the group, assembled round the sepulchre. No notice was taken; but the next morning, upon flocking to the spot, as usual, the people were startled to discover a human form, stretched stiff and lifeless, at the base of Martinuzzi's monument.‡ It proved to be that of the same ancient woman, who,

* The loss of this sacred relic; its having fallen into the hands of Solyman, and been by him restored to Sigismund, are so many "entremets d'histoire" recorded by P. de Reva, cent. vi.

† "Et rien enfin ne manque dans tous ces honeurs, que celui à qui on les rend."—Bousset.

‡ This monument, with its truism of "Moriendum est omnibus," still exists.

by some accident, must have been shut within the church, when the doors were closed on the overnight. She had been dead some hours. She was buried just without the north transept of the sacred edifice; and over her grave was placed, soon after, a plain tablet, having a short Latin inscription, to the following purpose:—

TO UNNA,

RELICT OF THOMAS POLGAR,

LEADER OF FIVE HUNDRED TENTS OF GIPSIES,

THIS STONE IS ERECTED,

IN GRATITUDE FOR LIFE PRESERVED, IN CHILDHOOD;

BY VERONICA,

QUEEN OF HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA.

THE END.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

The Reader, whose previous knowledge of the history of our story, will probably have been derived from the pages of Robertson, Coxe, and Knolles, may be apt to conclude, that we are wholly unwarranted in substituting a daughter of Martinuzzi, to so conspicuous and exalted a station, as that in which we have introduced our heroine.

We can produce, however, good authority for our apparent disregard of the frontier line, which separates historical truths from the traditions of the legendary, or the fictions of the romancer.

See Michael Brutus, Epistola ad Berzeuiacum, p. 236: and Franciscus Forgachius, who (l. i. p. 35, 36, "inter occultas Martinusii destinationes,") has recorded the "arcana consilia," which make the foundation of our tale.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY STEWART AND CO.,
OLD BAILEY.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 042230778